ROSARA;

OR, THE

ADVENTURES

OF AN

ACTRESS:

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A

STORY

FROM

REAL LIFE.

Tranſlated from the Italian of PIETRO CHIARI.

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M.DCC.LXXI.

with the favour of the publick. Thoſe early applauſes, made me fonder of acting than I had ever been of rope-dancing; and, therefore, I applied with all poſſible diligence to improve myſelf in an art, which, for ſome time, at leaſt, was likely to be my employment. I had as yet, very little acquaintance with books: my poor education, had withheld from me the food of the ſoul. I, therefore, began to cultivate my mind with reading, as much as my circumſtances permitted, which did not ſuffer me to be entirely miſtreſs of myſelf.

I muſt own I was treated by our manager, and by the whole company with all that reſpect which was due to the recommendation of Lord B——, and which I endeavoured to deſerve, by my own application. I ſhould have been completely happy in my preſent

preſent condition, if my mother had been farther off, and my lover nearer. Her freaks every now and then, gave me diſturbance; though ſhe met with great indulgence, from every body upon my account; while his diſtance, and the very few letters I received from him, kept me on the rack, and made me fear, that my love, and all its blooming hopes were blaſted. He had not come to Naples at the time he promiſed; and the excuſe he ſent me, ſeemed ſo frivolous, that I concluded it was a mere pretence. He made uſe of a correſpondent of his, the Baron di Cervia, who reſided at Naples, and in whom, he placed an entire confidence, as a channel for our correſpondence, that it might be kept a ſecret, and not reach the knowledge of his mother. By his direction, likewiſe, I placed an intire confidence in this man; but that truſt, coſt me dear.

Honeſt minds, are much to be pitied: as they are ingenuous themſelves, they are apt to believe others of the ſame caſt: nor do they, ſuſpect a perfidy in ſuch, of which they are incapable themſelves. The maxim ſo common, in the world, "that we ſhould truſt nobody," ſeems ſomewhat hard, and impracticable in civil ſociety: but I will venture to ſay, that we ought always to keep an eye upon it: unleſs we chuſe to be betrayed by ourſelves. Had I then been furniſhed with all thoſe lights, and all that experience of the world, which to my coſt, I have now acquired, I ſhould not, for ſome time, have been the ſport of fortune, by ſhutting my eyes, and relying upon others.

The firſt time I ſaw the Baron di Cervia, was, when he waited upon me, to deliver me a letter from the Count, my

my patron; who had charged me to apply to him, for the interchange of our correſpondence. I found him a man, whoſe appearance was ſpecious enough, to impoſe upon any perſon. He profeſſed ſo much friendſhip for the Count, and ſo much eſteem for me, that I could not imagine he had ſo black, and impious a heart, as in fact he had. There was nothing, he pretended, he would not do, for one, whom his friend Lord B——, had recommended to his good offices. As I found he was in a ſecret, which I had thus far kept with the utmoſt care, I made no ſcruple to lay my heart before him, that I might have ſome conſolation, and relief in my tender diſquietudes. I was extremely well pleaſed with the firſt, and ſome of his following viſits: it is true, he called frequently upon me, to aſk if I had any occaſion for his ſervice. But his behaviour, was ſo

reſerved, and nice, that it did not give me the leaſt ſuſpicion. Sometimes, indeed, he threw ſtrokes of gallantry into his converſation; but, I took it for granted, that he only meant them to divert, and enliven me: nor did it once enter into my head, that he was forming villainous deſigns againſt me. In the name and friendſhip of Lord B——, I thought I had a ſhield that would defend me from every baſe attempt. This confidence threw me off my guard: and through my negligence, I fell into a ſnare, which had almoſt robbed me of my reputation, and life.

I was now become the great topic of converſation of Naples; for I gave the publick, every day, more ſatisfaction. I now began to ſee my name in print; and I was frequently preſented with odes, and other little Parnaſſian ſhrubs,

ſhrubs, which might have rendered me vain, had not my natural ambition, fixed me to greater objects, and made me look upon the honours of my profeſſion as too vulgar, and contemptible for my regard. The world abounds with preſuming coxcombs, who pretend to be poets, without ſo much as knowing the meaning of the word *poetry:* but moſt people are fond of encomium, in what manner ſoever, encomium is announced, without reflecting, that it is a diſparagement to be praiſed by a poet-taſter. A droll accident of this kind happened to me, with one of thoſe gentlemen, which may ſerve as a warning to young women, not to be puffed up with the eulogiums of certain poets; who praiſe others, only to diſtinguiſh themſelves; and are ſo fooliſh as to think the world blind enough not to ſee their aim.

One day when the Baron di Cervia, came to visit me, he introduced to me a young gentleman of his acquaintance. He was tall; his countenance was pensive: he was genteel enough in his dress, and in his manners. This is a friend of mine, said he, madam, presenting him to me, a young gentleman of a very polite, and gallant turn; though he has had the misfortune to marry an old woman, to repair his shattered circumstances. He has a great desire to be acquainted with with you; and I hope you will not think it improper to honour him with your friendship: for, as you are the theatrical flower of our age, so is he the support and director of poetry in this learned metropolis. Permit me to assure you, that he is an original, in every branch of literature. He is a philosopher, an historian, an antiquarian, and a poet: in short, whatever, you will

will; as you will be convinced by a ſonnet which he begs leave to dedicate to your incomparable, and univerſally applauded merit.

Upon this, I ſurveyed him with more attention: for his firſt appearance, had not promiſed ſo much. The Baron had ſpoken of him in ſuch a high-flown title of panegyrick, that I was in doubt whether he had been in jeſt, or earneſt. Indeed, I ſuſpected that this encomium was only an oblique ſatire. The other heard his own praiſe without any kind of emotion. Through his calm, affected modeſty, you eaſily diſcovered his pride: and the very words in which he objected to the Baron's encomium, ſhewed he was ſenſible that he deſerved them. In ſhort, it ſeemed to me, that the man was mad, with vanity. That I might, however, avoid any miſtake, I anſwered in the Baron

di Cervia's own general ſtrain, of compliment:——that it gave me the higheſt ſatisfaction:——that I ſhould always have the profoundeſt reſpect:——that I thought myſelf extremely honoured; and all that French froth, which has no ſolidity beneath it.

After this prelude of politeneſs was over, the poet took out of his pocket, a large printed ſheet: he told me, it was the tribute he would that very evening pay to my merit in the full theatre, if I approved of it. I gave a glance at the paper, with that eagerneſs which ſelf love naturally excites; but I ſoon ſaw that I could make nothing of it: for a great part of it, was written in a language of which, I did not ſo much as underſtand the alphabet. This was an Italian ſonnet, which I thought very flat, and proſaic: but it was dignified with tranſlations

lations into Latin, and Greek verſes, which gave it a very pompous, and important air. I thanked the author for a work, the value of which I was not acquainted with. I warmly expreſſed my gratitude to him, and my readineſs to ſerve him in any thing that lay in my power: and, as he ſeemed to have ſome requeſt upon his tongue, which he was deſirous to make; I begged that he would ſpeak out; for I ſhould be happy to oblige him.

Madam, ſaid he, it is not my glory, but yours, which induces me to lay my heart before you. Thanks to my ſtars, I am ſo well known to all the Univerſities of Europe, that I need not ſeek reputation, and fame from a theatre. I am ſorry for you, on account of your genius; becauſe, I ſee you are in the hands of mercenary, and low poets, who either are inſenſible of your

talents, or cannot direct them to your advantage. The undertaking of your manager, to make the Italian theatre flouriſh again, is ſo noble, and laudable, that an Equeſtrian ſtatue, ſhould be decreed him, at the next high congreſs of the muſes. I know, that in the proſecution of his plan, he will not want poets to ſell him their labours: but what poets will they be, ſhould they prove ignorant of Latin, and Greek; and, conſequently, be unable to apply to the fountain-head of dramatic poetry, and to introduce good taſte into the world? Happy he, and ſtill more happy you, if the iſſue of this difficult enterprize was entruſted to me! What thoughts!—what cataſtrophes!—what ſcenes!—what verſes!—what ideas, burn in my fervid imagination; which, if delivered by you, would aſtoniſh the whole univerſe! I do not ſay, that I am a great man in my profeſſion; but

I underſtand Greek, Latin, French, and Engliſh, as I can convince you by this printed ſheet: and all thoſe, whoſe works you preſent every evening, with which you diſguſt every perſon of taſte, might, at leaſt, be my ſcholars. Well; I will indulge a whim, I have in my head; I will write a tragedy, and adapt the principal character to you. I have a thouſand literary occupations of the higheſt importance upon my hands; but I will find ſome vacant time for this purpoſe: and I will give it you as a ſpecimen of my taſte, and of my inclination to ſerve you.

Here he ended: but he had ſaid enough to convince me that he was a fool; and that he thought himſelf an oracle. I ſaw very well, where he was for having the affair end; and that he wanted, by his adulation, to win me over to his intereſt; and make me requeſt

queſt Mr. Marbell to chuſe him, in preference to any other, to write pieces for our theatre, and gain himſelf a ſubſiſtence. I waved a direct acceptance of his offer, with general terms of reſpect; which left me at liberty never to think of it more. But he drew an oppoſite inference from them: and, after having harraſſed me with a thouſand chimerical projects, which he had formed for my advantage, he at length took himſelf away, promiſing to make me another viſit very ſoon; while I was determined within myſelf, never to receive him more. His infatuation was ſo viſible, that, notwithſtanding my ignorance in letters, I immediately ſaw the man in his true light: and the Baron himſelf, who ſtayed with me ſome time, after he was gone, gave me palpable proofs that I had been right, in my judgment of him.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Character of an infatuated Poet.——His Deſign in getting acquainted with Roſara:——And the troubleſome Conſequences of that Event.

AS ſoon as he was gone, I longed to know who he was: and the Baron di Cervia, though he himſelf had introduced him to me, made no ſcruple to draw me the following picture of him. You muſt know, madam, ſaid he, that this is an original in his kind: for, perhaps, the world cannot produce his fellow. He was, formerly, a wine merchant here: but, I know not how it came about, he changed his wine into ink, and his commerce into literature. Swelled and briſtled with ſcholaſtic and abſtract

abſtract words, which he has picked up, without underſtanding them, he has taken it into his head to impoſe upon the world, and give himſelf out for an oracle.

Do you ſuppoſe, the greek and latin of that printed ſheet, are a faithful tranſlation of the ſonnet, which he dedicated to you? Believe me, they have not the leaſt relation to it. I can aſſure you, he has copied them, word for word, from ſome book, that treats upon other ſubjects, as minutely as a painter copies the ſtrokes of a picture. His preſumption is ſo great, that he fancies the world blind; and that it puts an implicit confidence in his impoſtures. I preſented him to you, for your entertainment; and to ſhow you a character, that would ſucceed very well in a comedy, of the preſent taſte. He is ſo far from underſtanding either greek or latin,

that

that he ſpeaks his native tongue very ill; and writes the dictates of his own fancy very awkwardly: his titles are affected and odd; nor can you find the ſmalleſt connexion betwixt them and his works, however you torture the common acceptation of language. You were juſt as reſerved with him, as you ſhould have been, in point of prudence. I bear with him for my amuſement; and becauſe he ſerves me more uſefully, than by writing verſes. If he ſhould come in your way again, pray be patient with him for my ſake: and, ſetting aſide his pedantic frenzy, you will find him very ſociable, and uſeful, on many occaſions.

I had too much need of the Baron di Cervia, to give an abſolute denial to this requeſt: though I was not very fond of having any communication with his blockhead of a poet, I went no farther,

than

than to tell him, that, on his account, I was willing even to do ſome violence to myſelf: though, after he was gone, I could not help reflecting on his recommendations, and thinking there was ſome myſtery couched under them. To what end could he deſire, that I ſhould admit a man to my houſe, with whom I was ſo much diſguſted; and who might diſcredit me in the eyes of the world? Could he mean to get a ſpy over my conduct; or, to employ him, as an aſſiſtant, in ſome ſecret intention of his own? Either under the one conjecture, or the other, I was neceſſarily uneaſy. Lord B——, ſo tenderly loved by me, might be ſure of my fidelity: but, notwithſtanding, a malicious tongue might put a wrong interpretation on my beſt regulated conduct; and make me appear culpable, from the ſlighteſt inadvertence. The Baron di Cervia had, as yet, given me no room to think,

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that he intended to rival the friend, who had depoſited his beſt hopes with him. Yet, he too was a man: and, perhaps, might think of uſing this animal, as an engine, to ſecond his own plot, and make me violate my faith.

This was, then, only a bare ſuſpicion, founded on the frailty of men; and, perhaps, too, on the vanity of women; which is apt to make us think a perſon uncommonly pleaſed with us, who hath been but once or twice in our company. My conjecture, in time, grew into an unqueſtionable truth; which gave me great uneaſineſs. I now received very few Letters from Lord B——; and, in a ſhort time afterwards, not one, for many weeks. As his letters, as well as mine, paſſed through the hands of the Baron di Cervia, I made him acquainted with my inquietude; and asked him, what could be the

the reaſon of this epiſtolary ſtagnation? But he aſſured me, that he knew nothing, beyond the exrent of his commiſſion; and waved the ſubject, for ſome other converſation, which might be leſs mortifying to me; and, perhaps, leſs grating to him. He frequently broke out into exclamations, againſt the inconſtancy of men; which were ſo many ſtabs to my heart; and ſeemed to forebode the infidelity of my patron. His philoſophical maxims, likewiſe, made me very penſive,—"That the preſent good, alone, deſerves that name: —that a remote proſpect of advantage, as it might, every moment, fail us, on account of its uncertainty, was unworthy of our attention:—that a woman, particularly, ought not to neglect a *preſent* certainty, for a *future* uncertainty; which, if it brings no other inconvenience upon us, makes us loſe a great part of our life; and renders our hap-

happineſs more tranſcient, and momentary.

His crack-brained poet, who came, every day, to teize me with his inſipidities, agreed with him in theſe obſervations. This fellow grew, by degrees, leſs guarded in his terms: and, whereas, before, he only laid hold of every opportunity to extol the Baron, his great mæcenas, to the ſtars, he now had the impudence to enlarge on the high eſteem he had for me; and to inſinuate to me, that I ſhould find my account, in preferring him to every other lover. This diſcovery did not at all ſurprize me: for I had expected it; and foretold it, from preceding ſymptoms. However, I was very much perplexed to find an anſwer: as, whatever I ſhould give, might be very critical, in my circumſtances.

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Had I followed the dictates of my natural pride, and warmth, I ſhould have turned from him with diſdain; and given him a ſevere intimation not to come into my preſence any more.—— But I reflected, that his protector would certainly ſupport him, if he acted by his commiſſion: and who knew what he might write of me to Lord B——, to ruin me in his affection, and avenge himſelf? As I received no letters from Palermo, I did not know upon what footing I ſtood there. All appearances announced ſome imminent danger: but it was incumbent on me to avoid bringing it on more quickly, by my own imprudence. In my circumſtances, it was beſt for me to diſſemble my reſentment: but, at the ſame time, to let the offender know, that my honeſt conduct deſerved better treatment. I therefore begged of him, if he had any friendſhip for me, that he would talk to me

no

me no more in thoſe terms:—that I had come to Naples to gain my bread, by my own induſtry, and not by the favours of another:—that I would remain unchangeable in my ſentiments;—and that, whatever were the ſecret diſpoſitions of my mind, they ſhould be regulated, and determined, only by myſelf.

Thus our diſcourſe, for that time, ended. But I ſoon perceived, that the Baron di Cervia acted in concert with his miniſter: becauſe he ſlackened in his viſits: and, when I ſaw him, he behaved to me with an affected reſerve, and indifference. When I reflected within myſelf, on the abſurdity of his conduct, I ſaw, very plainly, that the Baron had a paſſion for me; and, that he made uſe of the interpoſition of another, that he might have it in his power to do me a miſchief, without appearing

culpable

culpable for it. This artful policy, which I ſaw very clearly, through the veil which human iniquity had thrown over it, perplexed and tormented me ſo much, that I entirely loſt my tranquility of mind; and was diſtracted what courſe to take.

A month had now elapſed, ſince I had received a letter from my lover; tho' I had written him four long ones, full of tender complaint, and intreaties. Fearing they had been kept up, by the Baron di Cervia, I tried another ſecret method of conveyance; but without effect. Who can expreſs my ſuſpenſe, my grief, my deſpair? Eſpecially, as I was obliged to keep my agony to myſelf; that I might not be the talk of the family: and to *act*, every night, with ſmiles upon my lips, while poiſon was rankling in my heart. My mother, too, added to the cruelty of my ſituation,

tion, by her continual reproaches: for ſhe did not think I payed ſufficient honour to the Baron di Cervia, from whom, ſhe ſaid, I had reaſon to expect great things. The poet, likewiſe, was entirely in her way of thinking: for fools, very often, agree in opinions; and, by their narrow, gloomy ſentiments, they endeavoured to heighten my deſpair. I muſt further obſerve, that the anguiſh of my mind made me indifferent about my profeſſion: and that applauſe, with which the public uſed to ſalute me, at my firſt appearance, died away: nay, I was even told, by the hiſſes and inſults of the gallery, that I did not anſwer the expectations which I had raiſed at firſt.

As I was no leſs ſenſible to glory, than to the paſſion of love, I was ſo perplexed with this change, that I knew not where I was. Theſe freaks of for-

tune ſeemed inchantments. She had ſo ſoon whirled me from the top to the bottom of that wheel, on which our happineſs or miſery turns. I could not ſay, whether I was moſt grieved at loſing the proſpect of being married to Lord B——, or at loſing that public applauſe, which, at once, gratified my vanity, and gave me foundation to hope for better fortune. The truth is, the two main ingredients of my happineſs ſeemed, to me, indiſſolubly connected. The love of the Count was the ſource of the favour, in which I ſtood with the world: and when I loſt the former, I thought the loſs of the latter, though I knew not how, was but a natural and neceſſary conſequence. It was very eaſy to ſee, that the world was governed by general opinion: friends had raiſed me; and enemies might depreſs me. But what enemies could I have, who had done harm to no one? Alas! how

ill

ill! this reaſoning holds in our intercourſe with the world! There are always people, who do ill, from an abſtracted, diabolical pleaſure, in perpetrating it. A perſon, who lives in public view, cannot, with certainty, infer, from his conduct, whether he will have the love, or hatred, of ſociety. Perſonal merit, is, commonly, our moſt formidable enemy: becauſe every one preſumes it in himſelf, and hates to acknowledge it in another. Happy ſhould we be, if we could eſcape moleſtation, by not giving any! But, ſuch is the depravity of of human diſpoſitions, that one man is ſtimulated to oppreſs another, by the mere accrimony of envy, and the fear of being rendered obſcure, by the too ſhining merit of others.

From that time, I ſaw theſe maxims in their full and true light: but they did not ſuffice to guide me through the

ſecret lybarinth of malice; which I afterwards too plainly diſcovered by its effects. I wanted ſome honeſt friend to inform me of my danger: but the inhuman politeneſs of the world often prevents people from telling us uſeful, though diſagreeable news. I was indebted for the intelligence of my ſituation, to a perſon, whom I ſhall never forget, and whom I never ſhould forget, had he only done me this one good office. If any recompence from me, except my gratitude, is worthy of him, I beg his acceptance of one in theſe Memoirs, where I give him that honourable place, which he ſo well deſerves, for the pains he took, to remove my troubles, by the exertion of good offices, as well as to ſooth them, by the healing and magic balm of friendſhip.

CHAP

CHAP. III.

The Baron di Cervia, perſecutes Roſara:—the good Effects that attended it, through the Friendſhip of Don Cirillo, with whom Roſara, had become acquainted.

WHEN I was one evening in my dreſſing room at the theatre, where I was waiting, till it ſhould be my turn to take my part upon the ſtage, Don Cirillo, in a contiguous dreſſing room was ſpeaking low, yet I often heard him, mentioning my name. He was a gentleman of a good family, who lived upon his fortune; but lived like a philoſopher: and, as he had, beſides his acquaintance with other ſeverer ſtudies, a fine taſte for poetry, he often frequented our houſe; and recommended

ſuch pieces as might do us credit, and make for our intereſt: and, to his nice inſtructions, we often owed our juſtneſs, in repreſenting them. I had ſeen him before, and converſed with him; but, as the anxiety of my mind kept me, as it were, out of the world, I, perhaps, was the only perſon, who treated him with reſerve. Far from being offended at my gravity, he always behaved to me in the genteeleſt manner; but yet not with all that frankneſs, and confidence which he ſhowed to others. In a word, we were acquaintance, but not intimate; and though, I was not without an idea of his merit, yet I had not taken ſuch particular, and juſt notice of it, as to deſire to know him better. But hearing myſelf named by him without knowing the drift of his diſcourſe, curioſity made me lend an ear: but I could hear nothing diſtinctly except my name. I do not remember

member what particular ſuſpicions I at firſt caught upon this occaſion. I know that I took the liberty to go to him, and frankly aſked him what he was talking of, ſince my name ſo often entered into the converſation. Nothing at all, madam, anſwered he, without the leaſt confuſion. There are none here, but who wiſh well to you; and your name is always mentioned by us, with tenderneſs, and reſpect. Perhaps, I might find excuſes that would acquit me, for not telling you the truth; but, I dare ſay, I ſhould wrong your mind, if I did not think it ſuperior to vulgar obloquy. We were talking of thoſe inſipid ſatires, which are every day, coming out againſt you, though you deſerve only encomiums. That you may not give yourſelf any trouble about them, I have only to tell you, that they flow from the pen of Don Capoſtorno, that ignorant, and wrong-headed

poetaſter; who, at the inſtigation of the Baron di Cervia, would make you odious to the publick, to avenge that gentleman's cauſe, who gives out, that you have done him ſome injuries. If theſe pieces came from another hand, and had even more poignancy in them, I know you have ſo much good ſenſe that you would only reſent them with your contempt.

This was the ſubject of my diſcourſe: and I thought you were informed of a ſtory, which gave general offence. I am ſorry, however, to think that you ſhould, in any degree, ſuffer by it: for the number of the bad, is greater than that of the good: and, we ſometimes loſe, in a moment, the credit which it has coſt us years of labour, and virtue, to acquire. Take courage, madam; if we are not born with it, we innure ourſelves to bear hardſhips, by feeling,

and

and being habituated to them. By failing, even againſt the ſtream, we at length reach the head of the river: and, whoever would diſtinguiſh himſelf from the herd of mankind, muſt be content for ſome time to exert his merit in obſcurity; and muſt oppoſe a firm breaſt, againſt the attacks of malice, like the immoveable and towering rock, when it is buffeted by a ſtorm.

This friendly gentleman had now removed a veil from before my eyes: and I ſaw clearly the danger of my ſituation, which I could not before perceive. If I was alarmed by the information he gave me, I was as much animated by his prudent advice. I affected a ſuperiority of mind ſomewhat rare in my ſex, to ſhow myſelf worthy of his confidence in an affair, which, notwithſtanding, oppreſſed my mind, with a thouſand gloomy thoughts. I begged

he would be ſo obliging as to get me a ſight of thoſe ſcurrilous pieces, which had been written againſt me, from a ſpirit of malice, that I might have the pleaſure, when I read them, of refuting them, with my conſcience. And I aſſured him, I ſhould have been more particularly rigid in eradicating any defects I might have, if I had thought they had been conſpicuous enough to attract the notice of the world. As for Don Capoſtorno, and the Baron di Cervia, I told him I was not ſurprized that they had treated me in this manner: for they had before given me convincing proofs that I was not to expect any thing better from them. With regard to myſelf, I ſhould always eſteem him one of my deareſt friends: for what can be more humane, and ſerviceable, than to enable us to ſteer our conduct right in difficult circumſtances, by honeſt truth, and wholeſome counſel? And I ſhould be

be much obliged to him, if he would always uſe the ſame frankneſs with me, how diſagreeable, and grating ſoever, it might ſound in my ears.

Don Cirillo, applauded my ſentiments; and as, he ſaid, he perceived I had ſpirit enough to triumph over my enemies by deſpiſing them, he promiſed to gratify me in what I had requeſted of him; that by reading the inſipid ſatires, which had been written againſt me, I might learn in what eſtimation they would be held by people of ſenſe, and candour, to whoſe tribunal alone, we ought to appeal for a thorough juſtification of our conduct. Scarce half an hour had elapſed, after this converſation, when the Baron di Cervia, came upon us. My blood curdled in my veins, and my eyes ſtruck fire, at the ſight of him: but prudence bad me diſſemble, and be ſilent. I thought it

was my buſineſs not to irritate him any further: ſo I pretended an extreme head-ach, to cut off any length of converſation with him; which muſt then have been very diſagreable to me. I had little now to hope for, from Lord B——: and, ſhould any hope remain, I now plainly ſaw, that I could not expect any ſucceſs from the intervention of the Baron di Cervia. I was, therefore, determined to rid myſelf of him, whatever ſhould be the conſequence: and I wiſh I had done ſo ſooner; as I ſhould then have ſpared myſelf much uneaſineſs, of which he was the ſole cauſe.

The next morning before I was up, one of our ſervants, brought me a packet, which made my heart leap for joy: as I fancied it would contain ſome news of Lord B——, whom I every moment expected from Palermo. I was out in my conjecture: for the diſtraction

traction of my mind had made me, at that juncture, forget the diſcourſe of the preceding evening. The packet came from Don Cirillo; and contained many looſe ſheets of ſatires, epigrams, and ſonnets, of which I had the honour to be the ſubject. He accompanied this agreeable preſent, with a poetical letter, of which, I will here ſubjoin a copy; as I ſhall do with the reſt of his pieces addreſſed to me, that I may give, at leaſt, to poſterity, this ſlender teſtimony of my gratitude, towards a friend, who contributed, not a little, to my preſent fortune. The letter was as follows:

'O THOU, than whom no Latian
'fair,
'No nymph who breathes a foreign air,
'Is more intitled to the praiſe
'Of ſome high poet's deathleſs lays;
'Accept this humble, artleſs verſe,
'Which

'Which undertakes not to rehearſe
'Thy merit; but begs leave to give
'A teſtimony, that I live
'Watchful, and ready to fulfill
'Each intimation of thy will.
'Oh! would the Muſe's hallow'd train
'To ſmile on their admirer deign,
'Oh! could I ſtrike the golden lyre,
'My working boſom all on fire,
'With drenches of the ſacred ſpring,
'Of thee, Roſara, then I'd ſing:
'Then ſhould thy merit meet it's claim,
'And ſhine in everlaſting fame.
'But, till this noble boon I gain,
'I'll from the bold attempt refrain:
'Mean time, let virtue warm my ſoul,
'And all my ſentiments controul;
'Still make me hate the monſtrous crew,
'Who inly ſicken at the view
'Of worth; and with infernal aim,
'Strive to ſuppreſs her gen'rous flame:
'And ſtill with quick and ardent eye,
'Merit like thine may I deſcry.

'And

'And while imagination warms,
'Attentive to it's heavenly charms,
'May it my ſoul to acts inſpire,
'And make me *be* what I *admire!*
'Then, haply, may my feeble Muſe
'Augment her force, and ſtretch her
'views:
'To thee, fit tribute may I give,
'And write as greatly as I live.
'For virtue, chemiſtry divine,
'Completely gives the ſoul to ſhine;
'Speeding her, in her generous courſe
'With more than common mental force;
'And almoſt makes our mortal clod
'The receptacle of a GOD.
'Inclos'd the wretched lines I ſend
'Thrown out againſt my injured friend.
'Oh! not a ſpark of truth is there;
'Of genius, not a ſpark they ſhare:
'Deſpiſe them, burn them; for they're
'all
'Vatinian hate, Lucillian gall.

'Sacred.

'Sacred Apollo, may the men
'Who thus have exerciſed their pen,
'Ne'er taſte that conſeerated rill,
'Whoſe current dignifies thy hill!
'Accurs'd perverſion of thy art,
'Form'd to correct, and raiſe the heart!
'Muſt numbers utter in our days
'Scanda', inſtead of worthy praiſe!
'Time was, when verſe it's worth pre-
'ſerv'd,
'Nor from it's firſt intention ſwerv'd:
'It's firſt intention——to call forth
'Or latent, or conſpicuous worth;
'To bid, when an untimely doom
'Threaten'd the majeſty of Rome,
'Dictators wipe the awful brow,
'And for war's thunder quit the plough;
'Bid Cato lift the fatal ſteel,
'And periſh with the common weal;
'Bid chaſte Lucretia, call for death,
'And with their fame, reſign their breath.'

I was not a judge of poetry; becauſe I had hitherto read very little of it. Indeed, I had often heard that Don Cirillo had a very conſiderable poetical vein: and whether or no, it was on account of this prejudice, in his favour, joined to the impreſſion I had juſt received of him, for having made me the ſubject of his muſe, I remember, I read theſe verſes twice over, with a great deal of pleaſure. When I examined the papers he had ſent me incloſed, I had firmneſs enough to laugh while I read them: becauſe, thanks to Heaven, I found myſelf innocent of every thing they laid to my charge. Their ſtyle was ſo inſipid, and vulgar, that malice ſeemed to have guided the pen: art was certainly out of the queſtion. I keep them ſtill by me; and they are ſo far from making me bluſh, that, if I could find a bookſeller, who would be willing to put himſelf to ſome expence with very little

little hope of profit, I would, myſelf, deſire him to print them: as I am ſenſible, that their publication would be the ſevereſt puniſhment I could inflict upon the authors. Satire is an infamy that falls on the head of the writer; and, therefore, in every well-regulated government, it is denounced againſt, and proſcribed. A man ought not to be concerned for being made the ſubject of it; provided he is conſcious of his innocence: for Heaven alone, can judge of our ſecret thoughts. Our external conduct lies before the tribunal of the world, where the deciſions of the good, alone, have the force of law, and where, at the end of the proceſs, the artful impoſtures of malice loſe all their influence.

The firſt time I ſaw Don Cirillo afterwards, I thanked him for his polite remembrance of me: and, I even deſired him

him to favour me with his company, whenever he found it convenient; becauſe I thought his acquaintance would afford me an excellent opportunity to cultivate my mind; and, to conſole myſelf, in my diſtreſsful circumſtances, with the maxims of ſound philoſophy. He told me for anſwer, that I could not make him a more agreeable offer; of which, he would convince me, by doing himſelf the honour of waiting upon me very often. He was as good as his word: and, I may with truth aſſert, that if, during my long gloom of adverſity, I ever ſaw a ray of light, that ray proceeded from him; who ſought every method to divert me from anxious thoughts, and furniſh me with ideas that might rouze, and improve my underſtanding; and might, be of ſervice to me, in the practice of my profeſſion.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

The Baron di Cervia forms new Plots against Roſara. —— Her Precautions to avoid them.

THE firſt benefit I received at Naples, from the friendſhip of Don Cirillo, was, that he regained me that applauſe, which I had loſt, through the malice of Don Capoſtorno, and the Baron di Cervia. After he had fallen upon that thought, he communicated it to me; but I was very dubious about the iſſue: becauſe I did not know what means he would make uſe of, to procure ſucceſs.

The event ſhowed, that he was not deceived in his expectation. He compoſed

poſed a Comedy, which was wrought up with ſo much art; and in which he had prepared ſo ſtriking, and ſo applicable a character for me, that, if it was well repreſented, it would neceſſarily reinſtate me in the favour of the public; to whom it exhibited a picture of my ſituation. The comedy was intitled *Lo Sdegno amoroſo*, i. e. *The Amorous Reſentment*; a title that Braccolini has given to one of his comedies: but, excepting that particular, there was very little reſemblance betwixt his, and mine.

One of the perſons, in this piece, payed his addreſſes to me: but I did not hearken to them: he was unworthy of my love. By his vindictive machinations, he gave me room to fear, that my true-lover, who was at a diſtance, turned unfaithful. He kept my mind upon the rack, and reduced me to a

moſt

moſt deplorable condition. As the poet had here drawn ſo exact a picture of my own circumſtances, the reader will eaſily imagine, that I played my part with all the force that paſſion and intention could give it. The ſequel anſwered my expectations: and the play made ſo much noiſe in Naples, that my name was in every body's mouth. The moſt pathetic ſcenes having acquired me compaſſion and favour, my enemies became the objects of univerſal deteſtation. Indeed, they had art enough, not to ſeem ſenſible of being thus expoſed upon the theatre. As they did not foreſee the blow, for it was meditated in ſecret, they had not an opportunity to elude it. When they ſaw, that the current inclined in my favour, they joined their applauſes to the voice of the public: but, ſecretly, they avowed revenge.

From

From that time (let me be permitted to ſay it, without the imputation of vanity) I really became the idol of the people of Naples, to whom I ſhall always think myſelf obliged: as it was on my account, that our company continued to act there, all that year. The Baron di Cervia, and his poetaſter, were ſtung with the keeneſt indignation at my ſucceſs; but they appeared as unconcerned as poſſible; and ſtill continued to plague me with their viſits: though they made them ſhorter, and leſs frequent, than before. Finding, that the arts they had hitherto employed againſt me, were vain, as I had Don Cirillo on my ſide; who lived in very great credit; and, in his dramatic works, which were much ſought for, by our company, always had an eye upon my intereſt, and always endeavoured to keep me in public favour; they now changed the attack: and it

coſt

coſt me much more difficulty, and uneaſineſs, to eſcape their new contrivances.

As this man had fixed me, at Lord B——'s requeſt, in Mr. Marbell's company; and had engaged him to give me a ſalary, far ſuperior to my merit; he thought he could eaſily be revenged of me, for my honeſt refuſal of his love, by depriving me of that bread, which he had been inſtrumental in procuring me under the neceſſity of being obliged to accept of his ſervices.

Mr. Marbell was not one, who would ſuffer himſelf to be ſeduced by the malice of party, to the prejudice of his intereſt: but his company was compoſed of human beings; and, therefore, ſubject to thoſe paſſions, which tyrannize over the world. My enemies employed, ſo ſucceſsfully, the arms of jealouſy,

and

and envy, that they raiſed the enmity of my companions againſt me, to a violent height: who believed, from their inſtigation, that I was for lording it over them, with my good fortune; and for carrying away all the glory myſelf; which every one of them had a right to ſhare. They inſinuated to them, that I purchaſed the applauſe of the public, at the expence of my honour:—that my gallantries had won over, to my ſide, the pens of the poets; who wrote the moſt active, and ſhining characters for me, that I alone might be the object of univerſal adoration. People of every profeſſion have their emulation, and ſtate. Jealouſies, if I may uſe the expreſſion, which are ſo keen, that they would rather give up life, than their punctilios of honour, often merely imaginary, and chimerical. Comedians err, in this article, more than any other order of people. Perhaps, they are ſo

captious, from their anxiety to preſerve their bread, by preſerving their theatrical reputation: becauſe, too, every one deems himſelf greater than another; and thinks, that negligence, or incapacity, are injuriouſly laid to his charge.

However that be, my companions were now all in arms; becauſe I was more honoured than they. The union of a company was, at preſent, broken, which had, hitherto, been a model of brotherly concord. Mr. Marbell, too, was much embarraſſed by this affair. He knew not how to appeaſe the reſt, without giving me pain: which he was very loath to do: as I was very diligent to excell; and brought him great advantage. His beſt medium was, to apply himſelf to Don Cirillo; and deſire him to operate with leſs ardour in my behalf: but our cloſe friendſhip made him ſuſpect, that we loved each other: and,

and, therefore, witheld him from touching a ſtring, which might have offended that gentleman.

Mr. Marbell was miſtaken in this conjecture: but when we know not the hearts of thoſe we have to deal with, prudence directs us always to ſuppoſe the beſt; and, at the ſame time, to fear the worſt. Don Cirillo was my friend: but it cannot juſty be ſaid, that we were lovers. He made it his ſtudy to oblige me: but I could not infer, from any word, that either dropped from his mouth, or his pen, that he had a paſſion for me. As I was now in ſo melancholy a ſituation with Lord B———, from whom I had nothing more to hope, and of whom I had no account, it gave me great ſatisfaction to have, in him, a virtuous and learned friend; whoſe ſentiments were ſimilar to mine: not that he might ſooth me with the ten-

derneſs of love; but that he might inſtruct me:—that he might diſſipate my gloomy thoughts, with his converſation:—and, I muſt add, that I might let the Baron di Cervia, and Don Capoſtorno ſee, that another perſon had more aſcendancy over my mind, than they. I obſerved, on many occaſions, that my intimacy with Don Cirillo, gave them a good deal of diſturbance: they often, deſignedly, came upon us, when he was making me a viſit. My mother, who was earneſtly deſired to rid me of their viſits, on theſe occaſions, by any pretext, acted quite in contradiction to us: nay, one would have imagined, that ſhe had been in the plot with them: and had ſent to inform them, that, if they thought proper, they might find us together. This was the ſource of their pungent ſarcaſms; of the whiſpers of the family; of the reports ſpread over town, and country, though

though I could not tell by whom, that, at the end of the year, Mr. Marbell was determined to diſmiſs me: leſt he ſhould ſacrifice his company to my vanity. All theſe circumſtances pierced me to the ſoul; though I was ſenſible I had not deſerved them. I could not think of going, as a vagabond, from one company to another: it ſhocked the delicacy of my ſentiments. Lord B——'s inconſtancy obliged me to ſupport myſelf in the profeſſion I had undertaken. I preferred the houſe I was in, to any other: nay, I thought it was the only one, in which I could gain honour, without loſing my moral character, or, my quiet. In ſhort, I had, frequently, my cruel paroxyſms of grief, in which I exclaimed againſt the perfidy of Lord B——: as if he had brought me into all this perplexity; from which I ſaw no means of extricating myſelf.

Above all, I was moſt anxious to rid myſelf of the Baron di Cervia; whom I looked upon as the capital enemy of my repoſe: and who, by his importunities, grew every day more odious to me. I durſt not even effect this deſire; leſt I ſhould, afterwards, have cauſe to repent it. He was always giving me ſome new hopes, that he would get me news of Lord B——, to whom he had written ſo peremptorily on my account, that he would be obliged to decide my deſtiny, in ſpight of his obſtinate ſilence. I knew not how, in the courſe of their correſpondence, my lover was now to determine concerning me: nor how his late ſuſpenſe could be occaſioned, but by his infidelity. I thought it, however, better for me to wait the deciſion of my deſtiny, in patience: but alas! how much did that patience coſt me; and, what a cruel conſtraint did it put upon me.

At

At length, the time arrived, when I concluded, my ſufferings, and my hopes, were vain: and when, from a deſire to ſhun a preſent evil, I expoſed myſelf to a greater future one; from which I was delived only, by my good fortune. The Baron, one day, ſurprized me in my chamber: my capricious mother let him in; without giving me any notice of his coming. I happened to be reading a written paper, when he entered: upon which he began to rally me; ſuppoſing it was a love-letter I had received from Don Cirillo, whom I had not, as yet, ſeen, that day. The day before, was Don Cirillo's birth-day: and, as he chanced to mention that circumſtance to me, I deſired him, in jeſt, to make me a preſent, relative to that period; and which might, at the ſame time, teſtify his friendſhip for me. He promiſed me a preſent:—it proved a literary one:—and ſuch as I would

have wiſhed. It was a poem upon the ſubject: I therefore read it to the Baron di Cervia, and Don Capoſtorno, who was with him: and I here give it the reader.

To Roſara.

'GO, humble ſtrains; on this my natal day,
'Convey my homage to the virtuous fair,
'Who hath not only charms to ſtrike the ſoul
'With the quick, ſubtle fire of magic love;
'But, likewiſe, to inſpire the purer warmth,
'The nobler moral tribute of eſteem.
'And, as of old, in uncorrupted Rome,
'Small gifts were ſent to patrons, and to friends,

'On

'On Birth-days: I, too, ſend my little
'boon.
'A ſprig of vervain; or, a freſh-culled
'flower;
'A verſe, or two, not poliſhed, but ſin-
'cere,
'Warmed then the breaſt, with honeſt,
'ſocial joy.
'On ſuch a tribute would a conſul
'ſmile,
'Or great Dictator: yea, his ſoul would
melt,
'When he received it; and would kind-
'ly plan
'To him, who gave it, a ſubſtantial
'good.
'But, in theſe covetous, luxurious days,
'What preſent, O Roſara, can we make
'To thoſe, who falſly call themſelves
'our friends,
'That draws not value from bewitch-
'ing gold!

'But I, whoſe lands no ſturdy oxen
'till,
'Who watch, and brood, not o'er my
'bags of pelf,
'Poor poet-like, preſent my artleſs
'lays,
'To one, who, e'en in this abandoned
'age,
'Virtue prefers to riches, in a friend.

'Of life, ſix luſtrums I have ſeen to-
'day;
'To-day the heart-felt privilege I clam,
'Of glorying in my high eſteem for
'thee,
'And of preparing an unuſual gift;
'Stale moral numbers, for a female
'ear.
'Such be my higheſt honour from thy
'ſex!
'Nor art thou without honour (let me
riſk

'The

'The bold aſſertion) when the meaneſt
'man,
'If mean he can be called, whom virtue
'rules,
'Reveres thee, for the greatneſs of thy
'mind:
'For that man's heart then ſpeaks: and
'the heart's voice,
'The heart's orginal, unbiaſſed voice,
'Is ſacred; for it ſpeaks as nature
'prompts:
'And nature is the oracle of God.

Such an attachment as I have for
'thee,
'Thy virgin-honour's bloom can never
'taint;
'Nor, if thou haſt, as thou deſerveſt to
'have,
'Some faithful lover, who ſends ſighs
'to thee,
'It cannot violate your mutual vows.

'No, good Roſara; 'tis not my de-
'ſign,
'To write encomiums on thy glowing
'cheeks;
'For, haply, they are conquered by the
'roſe:
'Nor yet on their ſurrounding candour
'bright
'To laviſh praiſe: for, haply, we may
'find
'More brilliant whiteneſs on our Alpine
'ſnows:
'Nor will I make thy liquid, varying
'voice
'The theme of my eulogium: for,
'perhaps,
'Soft Philomela's muſic equals thine.

'Oh! 'tis thy worthy ſoul, that I a-
'dore!
'It warms my fancy while it moves my
'pen.

'Thy

'Thy virtuous conduct, and thy ardent
'throb
'For more perfection: thy ſublime
'contempt
'Of life's dull vanities: and the high
'taſte
'Thou haſt, e'en now, for intellectual
'bliſs:
'The joy thou feeleſt, while I lead thee
'on
'Through human actions: and in hiſ-
tory's page,
'I hold thee forth, in clear, though com-
'plex view,
'The greatneſs, and the littleneſs, of
'man.
'The warmth thou catcheſt from the
'poet's flame,
'The tears that trickle from thy gene-
'rous eyes,
'While his ſtrong colours paint heroic
'worth,

'In

'In poverty, and chains: thy noble
'wrath
'To hear him ſing the luxury and pride
'Of knaves refulgent in their country's
'gold.
'And thy rich fancy following ſtill the
'bards,
'And eaſily aſſenting, while he tells
'What happineſs is his, beſide a brook,
'His body fed by nature's plain repaſt,
'And his ſoul raiſed to ſuch ethereal
'views,
'That, with the heat of imagery in-
'flamed,
'And, lulled in ſolitude's remoteſt vale,
'He quite forgets the madding croud of
'men,
'Or any, but his own ideal world.

'Theſe are thy qualities, on which I
'dwell,
'The objects of my love, and of my
'praiſe.

'Ye

'Ye thoughtleſs fair! why are your
'minds abſorbed
'In gawdy trifles: why your lives en-
'groſſed
'By dreſs, and paint, by operas, and the
'ball?
'The earthly frame, on which you doat
'ſo much,
'Was only meant to bloom, to fade, to
'fall,
'And crumble into duſt; but then,
'you have
'An immaterial principle, a ſoul,
'Intended by its Author, when it leaves
'The mortal frame, that keeps it here
'below,
'To mount from earth, and mingle
with the ſtars.

Roſara here ſhall ſurely ſhine: the
'fate
'Of thoughtleſſneſs, and vice, with
'prieſtly gloom,
'And

'And arogance, I'll not preſume to tell.
'But thy firm ſoul, in a corrupted world
'Kept pure, and poliſhed for a better
'ſtate,
'Soon as of mortal frailty it gets free,
'Shall ſpring, exulting, to ſome happy
'ſphere.
'Methinks, its progreſs will not be con-
'fined;
'But, through eternity, it will explore
'New ſcenes of knowledge, and new
'ſcenes of bliſs.
'Yes, in duration boundleſs, boundleſs
'ſpace,
'Still more it ſees, ſtill triumphs, ſtill
'refines,
'While Heaven's high Lord, his crea-
'ture deigns to view,
'And ſmiles on the good work of his
'own hands.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Roſara finds that Lord B——, is Married.—The Deſign ſhe forms to avenge herſelf of that Injury.

THE pure, moral eſteem, and enlarged ſentiments which ran through this poetical compoſition, did not ſuffice to convince the Baron di Cervia, that my connection with Don Cirillo was literary, and innocent. He made a thouſand diſcoveries of his malignant ſuſpicions, with that affected candour, which often proceeds from a heart full of gall. I thought I ſhould ſtoop too low if I made a ſerious defence, and juſtification of myſelf to him: ſo that I bantered, likewiſe, in my turn, to let him ſee that I was indifferent about his opinion

opinion of me. As he was taking his leave, he let a paper fall out of his pocket, which I took no notice of when I ſaw it drop, that I might have an opportunity of examining its contents, when I was alone. I ſnatched it up, as ſoon as he went away, and opened it with impatience. But, how can I expreſs my extreme amazement, when I found it was a printed ſonnet, with this galling, and fatal title: a ſonnet on the moſt auſpicious marriage of Lord B——, and the Marchioneſs P—.

The Count my protector married! I immediately exclaimed, almoſt out of my wits, and without recollecting that my mother was preſent:——behold the reaſons of his obſtinate ſilence, which I could not before dive into! Behold the fatal ſentence paſſed upon me, which condemns me to a perpetual lamentation of my folly! If he was determined

determined to betray me, why did he not give me a direct warning of my danger? And since he would be unfaithful, why might he not have been, at least, in one respect, sincere, and obliging?—As I was well acquainted with his mother's humour, he might surely have coloured his perfidy with an air of indispensable filial duty.—And why is his friend silent on this subject, letting me take the information by stealth, as if he was afraid to give it me in person?—Can I call the conduct humanity, of which, I never thought him capable? Oh! humanity, more cruel than barbarity itself! since it has revealed itself to me, after having kept me for many months in a deplorable mistake.—Can I believe that this is a wicked fraud, contrived to make me lay aside, of my own accord, all further hopes of Lord B——, and yield at last, to the desires of the Baron di Cervia,

via, who perſiſts in loving me, in ſpite of all my repugnancy? Surely, human iniquity cannot go ſo far.—The news of this marriage is in print; nor is it poſſible that, to impoſe upon one perſon, the whole world would be impoſed upon; to whom, beſides, the preſs durſt not authoriſe a manifeſt lye.—Yes, yes; I ſhall find it but too certain, that Lord B——, is married: and I have been fool enough to flatter myſelf, that, for my not more than tolerable face, a nobleman would ſacrifice his birth, honour, and the hopes of a greater fortune.—Learn, ſilly heart of mine, learn, to keep thyſelf, within the limits of thy duty; and pant not for impoſſibilities. We reach not greatneſs at a ſpring, when fortune hath frowned upon our birth; and we ſtand in need of wings to raiſe ourſelves above it. If my aim had been more moderate, who knows but even now they would have been

been compleated?—Now, I have nothing more to hope for: but let me not aggravate my misfortune. I have loſt a conſiderable advantage, becauſe my preſumption arrogated it to me:—but let me not add to my ſhame, by diſcovering my mortification. If Lord B— is married, his marriage ought to ſeem as indifferent to Roſara, as that of any other perſon, The Baron di Cervia, would triumph too much in the ſlight put upon me, if he ſaw that I was imprudently ſenſible of it.—I will convince him that I can be miſtreſs of myſelf; even though the victory coſts me much pain: and, from this ſuperiority of mind, in my preſent circumſtances, let him, at length, know, that he has nothing to hope for from me; and that he will always find me inflexible in deſpiſing him.

This was the determination which reſulted from a long train of thinking; which I indulged before my mother: though ſhe did not know what I was revolving in my mind. Having obſerved the firſt emotion of my aſtoniſhment, and perceiving me mute a long time after, ſhe went muttering about the room, and told me I was a fool: but ſhe did not preſume to ſay any more to me.—Don Cirillo came very opportunely, and interrupted her; to whom, after my kind thanks for the compoſition he had ſent me, I imparted the fact, at which I was ſo much ſurprized. He, who underſtood poetical ſtile of different people, as well as a woman underſtands caps, and lace, aſſured me that the ſonnet on Lord B——'s marriage was the production of Don Caſtoſtorno: and, for that reaſon alone, he ſaid, it's veracity ſhould be ſuſpected. He added, that he did not live in a cave;

cave; and, therefore, he thought it was impoſſible that gentleman could be married, as he had not heard a word of the matter, in the beſt and largeſt companies in Naples. He begged of me to ſuſpend my belief of this affair till he ſhould receive more credible intelligence from Palermo; for which he would write by the next poſt.

I concluded he only meant, by his perſuaſions, to ſooth, and cheer my mind; and divert me from the melancholy thoughts in which he ſaw me ſunk. I was determined, however, to abide by my reſolution of thinking no more of Lord B——, than if I had never been acquainted with him. So fixed was I, in this thought, and ſo inflamed with paſſionate reſentment againſt the perſon, who had deceived me, that if I then could have found any perſon, who would have married me, I would have inſtantaneouſly

inſtantaneouſly ruſhed into the nooſe, from which death alone could ſet me free; though in a few days I ſhould have bitterly repented of my raſhneſs.

I have now got to the grand criſis, in which I muſt confeſs I was ſo weak as to turn my thoughts on Don Cirillo for my huſband. The idea, however, did not ſeem to me ſo extravagant, that I ought to ſuppreſs it. I was for making it my indiſpenſible duty to think no more of Lord B——; by whom I thought I was baſely treated. I was for putting it out of the Baron di Cervia's power, to inſult me any further; and, for obliging him to pay me ſome reſpect. Don Cirillo had ſo much eſteem for me, and ſo much good ſenſe, that I had the greateſt reaſon to expect, he would make me an excellent huſband. He had enough of his own, on which we could live comfortably: but,

but, ſhould he be diſpoſed to let me follow my profeſſion, he might be of great ſervice to me, in the proſecution of it. That, I was almoſt ſure, he would never ſuffer: but, as indignation, and fancy puſhed me on, I naturally made my imaginary plan, as plauſible as I could. Though, he had never ſhewn any paſſion for me; yet, as he had given me the ſtrongeſt proofs of his eſteem, I concluded the conqueſt would not be difficult. However, I was determined not to be the firſt, to explain myſelf; as it would have ſhocked the delicacy of my ſex, and my natural pride. But then, it was poſſible he might never make ſuch a propoſal himſelf. His regard for me was ſo great, that he would not have riſked an equivocal expreſſion upon that ſubject, if he had not been ſure that it would have met with a favourable reception. His viſits to me, were taken

up in demonſtrations of his friendſhip for me; in literary diſcourſe; and in ſuch wiſe obſervations, as were fitteſt to procure me peace of mind, without the leaſt intermixture of love. It, therefore, was my buſineſs to bring him to the point; and to bring him to it with ſo much dexterity, that it might ſeem he had fallen upon it himſelf. This was the moſt difficult enterprize to execute; and wretched ſhould I have been, if I had executed it. For then, I ſhould have unawares been thrown into an embaraſſment, from which, I ſhould have wiſhed to be diſengaged at any event.

Whilſt I was maturing this difficult ſcheme within myſelf, I went one day in a party of pleaſure to a gentleman's country-ſeat, at a little diſtance from Naples. Some of my friends, had been invited thither; and in a manner, dragged me

me along with them. I knew that Don Capaſtorno, and the Baron his patron, were to be there; and on that account I went unwillingly, as I dreaded ſome diſaſter from the excurſion. Don Cirillo too was invited; but, he excuſed himſelf from going. That very day the Baron di Cervia called upon me, who had not ſhowed himſelf to me ſince the ſonnet dropped out of his pocket. He no ſooner preſented himſelf in my chamber, with his uſual witty queſtion, "Whether or no I was engaged," than I ſlipped the ſonnet into his hand; and, at the ſame time, ſaid, with an air of frankneſs, and indifference——a very pretty ſtory indeed! So I was not to know that Lord B——, was married, but by mere accident? Ah, madam, anſwered the Baron ſmiling, I was loath to throw a gloom over your preſent inclinations, by laying your misfortunes before you! Lord

B——'s jealous apprehenſions had more influence on his mind than my ſincere arguments.—But now it is over, and there is no remedy. If I had thought you would have been ſo intrepid under the ſhock, as I ſee you are, I would have informed you of a fact which I have known for ſome time.—You are proof againſt evil;—you can accommodate yourſelf to circumſtances;—you give an example of heroiſm to your ſex. Here he ſtopped: for they came to tell me, that the coach was ready, which was to take me into the country. I went, purely that I might not diſoblige my friends: for what is more excruciating, than to be in gay company with an aking heart? In ſocial life, we often give ourſelves very acute pain, merely to pay idle reſpect, and homage to others.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Roſara forms a Project of going to England.——The ſtrange Accident that prevents her from accompliſhing her Deſigns; and renders her more unhappy than ever.

AMONGST the many perſons, of whom this joyous party was compoſed, one gentleman attracted my particular obſervation. He was of a middling ſtature:—his manner, frank and lively:—he was genteely dreſſed:—ſeemed above forty years of age:—as I was told, was a foreigner;—and, that he had landed, from England, but about two days before. He ſurveyed me, from head to foot, with an air of importance, and ſuperiority: and when

they told him who I was, and what eſteem I had gained in Naples, as an actreſs, he expreſſed great pleaſure in having an opportunity of introducing himſelf to my acquaintance. As we were diſcourſing on the different parts of Europe, he told me, it was a misfortune to me, that I had been born in Italy. He ſaid, he had ſeen me play the night before, and had immediately remarked, within himſelf, that, if I was at London, or Paris, I ſhould be the delight of mankind. Merit, he ſaid, was much more prized, beyond the mountains, than in Italy; that, in either the one or the other metropolis, I might, already, have amaſſed a treaſure: and might, likewiſe, have caught a lover, who would, at once, have raiſed me to the higheſt pitch of earthly ſplendor. He added many other things, to which I was not altogether inattentive; though my mind was more occupied with other ideas.

ideas. He kept cloſe by me, almoſt the whole day; and held forth the ſame objects, repeatedly, to my view. I was fond of changes from my infancy. Though I enjoyed applauſe at Naples, I did not like to ſtay there, had it been only for this reaſon,—that I was expoſed to the impertinences, and malice of the Baron di Cervia. There was no likelihood that our company would ſoon leave that place; as Mr. Marbell found his account in continuing there. Hence it was, that the words of the ſtranger began, gradually, to attract my attention: and that I afterwards conſidered them at my leiſure.

Having told me, that he had made other peoples fortune, of my profeſſion, by ſending them to London, and to Paris, I began to hope, that he might, likewiſe, make mine. I told him, I was not vain enough to over-rate my

abilities; however, that opportunities were wanting to raiſe one's ſelf in the world; and that theſe opportunities had never fallen in my way. I alſo obſerved, that, though Italy was my mother-country, I did not feel much affection for it: as I had there met with ſufferings, which made me wiſh myſelf a thouſand miles diſtant from the ſcene where I underwent them. In fine, without opening my whole mind to him, I gave him ſufficiently to underſtand, that I ſhould have no objection to go either to France, or England, if he could aſſure me, that ſuch a ſcheme would turn out to my advantage.

He liſtened attentively to what I ſaid; and immediately replied thus:—Madam, let us deal plainly with each other. Be not under any reſerve with me becauſe I am a ſtranger. Depend upon it, I ſhall give you no ill-grounded encouragement.

couragement. Since I ſee you are diſpoſed to be your own friend, I will diſcloſe a ſecret to you, which I have kept, moſt rigidly, to this moment: and I did not think that I ſhould, ſo ſoon, have had occaſion to reveal it. You muſt know, then, that I have come from England, on purpoſe for you. The fame of your talents has reached that country: and, as the Engliſh will have the beſt performers, whatever they may coſt; and I do buſineſs for the opera-houſe, I have come over to Italy, to try if I can improve their opera, by prevailing on you to go thither. You need not ſay a word about a contract; you may make your own terms: and, in the mean time, you ſhall be furniſhed with all proper accommodations. It is your buſineſs to reſolve: but, however you do reſolve, I muſt enjoin you to ſecrecy: for I would not, upon any account, have the cauſe of my coming,

diſcovered at Naples; where I intend only to ſtay for a few days.

The propoſal was not to be rejected: nor yet was it to be accepted, without mature reflection. I, therefore, thanked him, for his polite offers: but I told him, that I had a mother; and that I would pay a proper regard to her will: —that I would, likewiſe, conſult with my beſt friends, before I took ſuch a ſtep:—that, in ſo doing, I ſhould not betray his ſecret; becauſe I would not mention his name:—that we ſhould talk over matters again;—and, that I ſhould be glad to ſee him at my houſe. But I begged, that he would diſcloſe nothing that paſſed betwixt us, to the Baron di Cervia: as he was the perſon, whom I would laſt of all chuſe to truſt with my intentions; or, with the plans of others, for my good.

Thus

Thus were meaſures concerted betwixt us: and we dropped the ſubject for that day, to avoid giving ſuſpicion. The adventure was ſo unuſual, and promiſed ſo largely, that it gave me more reaſon to entertain ſuſpicion, than hope. I obſerved, that the Engliſh gentleman, and the Baron di Cervia, underſtood each other: for they converſed in ſuch a manner, that it was eaſy to ſee, they were not new acquaintance. When I aſked of the latter an account of the other, he extolled him to the ſtars: told me, he was a perſon who had ſeen a great deal of the world; and had, every where, the moſt reſpectable connexions. I had not ſeen enough of impoſture to be able to detect it, with eaſe. We are ſo infatuated with ſelf-love, where our glory, or our intereſt, is in queſtion, that we put our invention on the rack, to render thoſe things credible to us, which have not the leaſt appear-

ance of credibility. Without ever ſuſpecting what *was*, I loſt myſelf in dreaming of what *might be*: and, miſerable, indeed, ſhould I have been, had I not, once more, been undeceived, by my good fortune.

I paſſed that night in debating with myſelf, whether, or no, I ſhould accept the offer that was made me: which ſeemed ſo very ſuitable to my circumſtances; and ſtill more to my deſires. I plainly ſaw, that my mother would always be a bar to my happineſs; which made me deſirous to be independent of her: but how could I ſeparate myſelf from her, without making a very ſolitary figure in the world? Here I fell into my old thoughts of getting a huſband, who would ſcreen me from the tattle of malevolence. I reſumed the project of marrying Don Cirillo; who, I thought, was a man of a very proper cha-

character to make me happy. I made a thouſand different reſolutions, which I knew not how to execute; and dropped them as they were formed. But, amidſt all theſe fluctuations, I ſtill kept hold of my grand determination, to forget Lord B——; and, if poſſible, to avenge myſelf of his infidelity. I intended to diſcloſe my new ſituation to Don Cirillo; and to be conducted in it by his friendly prudence. This was the moſt cheering ray of light I ſaw, in the gloomy proſpects of my mind.

I diſcovered my caſe to him the next morning, when he made me a viſit: and the diſcovery threw him into an agitation of mind, which ſeemed full as great as my own.—I know not,—ſaid he to me, after a long ſilence,—I know not, my deareſt madam, how to adviſe you. The project is ſpecious:—I know nothing of the ſtranger, of whom you

ſpeak,

ſpeak; but, for the very reaſon, that he is a ſtranger, you ought not to give him your implicit confidence.—Travellers are very often villains.—They have great intercourſe with a corrupt world: and it is difficult to detect their knavery. His acquaintance with the Baron di Cervia, makes me conclude very little in his favour. — Notwithſtanding all this, he may be honeſt: and, I think, nothing too great for your merit.—I I cannot think of ſuffering you to be in the power of people, whom you know ſo little of: people, who may abuſe your credulity; and reduce you to miſery. But then, if your fortune ſhould depend on this unforeſeen proſpect, it would give me inſupportable remorſe to think, that I made you ſhut your eyes againſt it, by my ſuſpicious reflections.—It ſhall be your affair to reſolve: for, as to me, I am ready to diſcharge to you the duty of a faithful friend; ſhould

it

it even be, by following you to the moſt diſtant parts of the globe.—I am maſter of myſelf: I chuſe to attend you: and, if I have your permiſſion, there is nothing to hinder me.—I beg you will determine to go abroad, if you have an inclination: for I will accompany you with the utmoſt chearfulneſs, if you think my preſence will contribute to your happineſs, and ſecurity.

This offer was enough to make me ſurmount every obſtacle; and determine, at all events, to leave Italy. Fond of this thought, I took him at his word; and intimated to my mother, that, in a few days, I intended to ſet off for England. She called me a fool, in her uſual way of complimenting me; and ſoon put the whole houſe into an uproar with the news.

In-

Indeed, I departed from the ſecrecy which the ſtranger had recommended to me: but I did not promiſe him that I would keep it. I was weak enough in laying any ſtreſs upon his propoſals. Had I deprived myſelf of a friend's advice, at this critical juucture, I ſhould have been guilty of the laſt degree of folly.

Whilſt my mother was communicating her daughter's intention, as a profound ſecret, to every one in the family, my Engliſh gentleman entered; who came to honour me with a viſit. Don Cirillo was ſtill with me: I received him very reſpectfully. I told him, he might ſpeak very freely before that gentleman; as he was a particular friend of mine, for whoſe honour I could engage; and to whom I imparted all my affairs. He expreſſed great pleaſure, at meeting with ſuch a perſon: and,

and, by the converſation he entered upon with him, a very favourable opinion might have been collected of him. He had been ſixteen years out of Italy: and, during his abſence, he had ſeen, and made himſelf known, to all the courts of Europe, of which he gave a very exact account. He gave out, that he had ſpent a good part of his large income, in travelling: and had, under his protection, a great many women, who excelled in the performances of art. He was acquainted with the moſt remarkable female adventurers of our age: he knew the three ladies, who had publiſhed their Memoirs, under the titles of—The Female Philoſopher,—The Singer through Misfortune,—and, The Dancer ennobled. As my fame had reached even to London, he had engaged to conduct me thither: and, for that end, he had undertaken this long voyage;

voyage; which he hoped he had not made in vain.

He was going on, when my mother came upon us abruptly, according to cuſtom.—She no ſooner fixed her eyes upon the ſtranger than they both changed colour: and my mother bawled out like a mad woman,——Ah! baſe huſband! unworthy to have ſuch a wife as I am; whom you have thus abandoned for ſo many years!—And here you are at Naples, without giving me the leaſt warning that you were coming hither in queſt of me. Look there.——There is your daughter, whom you left a child, of a few months old; and who, by my careful education, is now ſo noted in the world.—And God grant ſhe may conduct herſelf as her mother has done, and we may ſee her ſomething greater ſtill.

We were all ſtunned at theſe words: and I now found, that this important ſtranger was my father. Don Cirillo, and I, looked at each other, overwhelmed with amazement. My father himſelf was confounded: and he was incapacitated from evading the truth; as he was attacked by ſurprize. Not a word had he to ſay for himſelf, in return to the peal, which his wife had rung in his ears. We all fancied, for a while, that ſhe was raving: but the event convinced us, that ſhe was in her ſenſes; and that her reproaches were not without grounds.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The Danger Roſara is expoſed to, by having her Father near her,—The Means ſhe takes to get rid of him.—The Character of the Baran di Cervia.

WHEN my father was a little recovered from his firſt confuſion, he ſaid he had been thus far jeſting: and that his ingenuous character ſecured him from the charge of impoſture. I knew very well, replied he to my mother, that you were in Naples. I knew that my daughter was in great repute here: but I had a mind to have the pleaſure of making you laugh, by my manner of ſurpriſing you. I ſpoke the truth, when I told you, that I had come from England; and that I had come on her

her account. I gave myſelf out for a protector of the theatrical people, to introduce myſelf to her; and to manage, with the greater facility, the ſurprize I intended to give you. As for my having left you for ſo many years, I do not ſee you have any reaſon to complain of me on this ſcore: ſince, during my abſence, I have been too buſy to think even of myſelf. I have ſeen a good deal of the world: and if I have not, as yet, made money, I think I have, at leaſt, learned how to make it. A girl, with the talents of my daughter, is a capital that may produce a treaſure, if it be employed as I know how to employ it. To confine the value of ſuch a capital to Italy, is the ſame thing as to throw it away. This was the object of my coming; which I communicated to Roſara as ſoon as I had opportunity of converſing with her. I propoſed to her to go with me to London, or Paris; where

by

by her own genius, and my influence, ſhe might be aſſured of giving univerſal admiration, and of making her fortune. Now, my good wife, blame me if you can, for the innocent trick I have put upon you: for you ſee how likely my views are, to turn out to the advantage of you both; if you do not blindly oppoſe them.

I did not at all doubt, but this was an excuſe, which my father had invented, to conceal his knavery. I knew enough of his character, to diſtruſt him: and his forward manner fully ſatisfied me, that he was not a perſon, who deſerved an implicit confidence. To me, however, the ſcene was, in a moment, entirely altered: and, to the gay ideas of changing country, and fortune, very melancholy and gloomy ones ſucceded: which deprived me wholly of tranquility. The ſubjection I was under, to a mo-

ther,

ther, ſo ſtrange as mine was, gave me great diſturbance, it is true; but did not altogether deprive me of my liberty. But to that was now added, my ſubjection to a father, of a character yet more abſurd than her own; who might, perhaps, uſe ſome violent meaſures with me; which my high ſpirit would not bear. He had given me ſufficiently to underſtand, that he was for living at my expence: and that, not content with a little, he was for making me the inſtrument of effecting his fantaſtic ſchemes. My mother was expence enough to me: and I needed not another drone, to conſume the fruits of my labour. How could I think to check the licentiouſneſs of a profligate father: I, who loved domeſtic quiet, and was much averſe to let the world know any thing to my diſadvantage? What ſignified my good fortune, if I was to be in the power of two perſons, who could, upon every occaſion,

caſion, interrupt it by their follies, and caprice? —— How mortifying was my ſituation then; and how different from that, which my imagination had planned a few days before? Would there were no fathers, who thus abuſe the merit, and good fortune, of their daughters, to live themſelves, immerſed in eaſe, and idleneſs! How many reckon upon this capital: and, provided it anſwers their preſent rapacious deſires, are not content with reaping its daily fruits; but, even expoſe it to ruin?

Theſe reflexions, confirmed by the examples of others, which I heard every day, put me upon my guard, againſt my father: and I was now determined, that he ſhould not draw me out of Italy; though I had, at firſt, been of a different opinion. Should I even remain in Mr. Marbell's company, I had, in him, a worthy and diſcreet friend, who might bring

bring my father into proper order: as, by his addreſs, he had already made my mother ſupportable. Should I ſeparate myſelf from him, in whom I had the greateſt reaſon to confide, might I not apprehend ſome of thoſe diſaſters that are ſo common to my ſex; and that might prejudice my reputation, which I had, hitherto, guarded with ſo much care? Since Heaven choſe to weigh me down, with multiplied afflictions, it was better for me to crawl along the ground, than to attempt a ſoaring flight, from whence I might fall headlong on it.

Having eſtabliſhed this leading principle of conduct, dictated to me, merely by my honour, which I was reſolved not to ſacrifice, to the hopes of an uncertain fortune, I communicated it to Don Cirillo, and Mr. Marbell, that they might help me, by their friendly advice, to put it in practice. They both of

them approved my determination; and thought my ſuſpicions were well grounded. Mr. Marbell declared, that he would not part with me, at the hazard of his fortune; provided I approved of an expedient, which he was going to ſuggeſt to me; purely that I might proſecute my plan, without any diſturbance. The expedient was, that I ſhould ſign an antidated contract, by which I obliged myſelf to act in his company for ten years. I was pleaſed with the ſcheme: the contract was drawn and ſigned, with this promiſe, that it ſhould be void, if I married before the expiration of the term.

I now had another chain at at my foot, which made me dependent on Mr. Marbell: but which, I thought, ſecured me from the caprice of a father, who was for making me the tool of his chimeras. As Don Cirillo, and I, were afterwards

terwards talking over the articles, and the matrimonial clauſe——Ah! huſband, huſband! exclaimed I, — from what troubles might I be delivered, if Heaven would but throw a ſuitable match in my way! Are huſbands wanting? anſwered Don Cirillo: they were never yet ſcarce: and ſhall you find them ſo, who diſtinguiſh yourſelf ſo eminenently from the reſt of your ſex? Say rather, madam, that you find not your account in marrying: for I am ſure you might eaſily meet with a man, who would deem it an honour to have you for his wife. My heart tells me, that you were born for Lord B——: it tells me, that the malignant clouds will ſoon be diſperſed, which, at preſent, blacken the proſpect of your love: it tells me, that his lordſhip is not to blame for this ſeeming forgetfulneſs of you: and that, in conſequence of the applications I have made, in your fa-

vour, at Palermo, we ſhall come to the knowledge of a fact, which will ſet you both at eaſe. If I had not the ſtrongeſt preſage in my mind, of all this, I myſelf would now beg leave to make you a tender of my affection. But by no means my deareſt madam; by no means! Heaven forbid that I ſhould puſh you down the precipice; and make you fall, in your aſcent to that elevated ſtation, for which your merit deſtines you: and, for your obtaining of which, you have my warmeſt wiſhes. Lord B—— has been the firſt object of your tender ſentiments: and, whilſt your love is not hopeleſs, you ought to reſerve yourſelf for him. I ſhould think I dealt treacherouſly by you, if, by deſiring you to accept of me, I ſhould divert your views from a marriage, in which you might be much happier than I could poſſibly make you.—Indeed, though I am as averſe to marriage as the ſelfiſh abſtraction

tion of philoſophy can make me; yet I am ſo deeply affected, by your preſent ſituation, that I would do ſome violence to my own inclination, to ſet your heart more at eaſe. I can maintain you genteelly enough, in my ſtation: but you can only taſte, with me, the ſimple ſweets of phyloſophy: whereas, with Lord B——, you may enjoy all the pleaſures which life affords. Reſerve yourſelf for him, madam, till your caſe becomes deſperate; till it is clear that you cannot have him: and bring not upon yourſelf the galling reflexion hereafter, that you marred your good fortune, by your own precipitation.

Such ſentiments, from the mouth of Don Cirillo, did not come upon me altogether unawares: yet, notwithſtanding, they ſomewhat ſurprized me. I was for endeavouring to forget Lord B——: and he was for having me

ſtill to hope, in ſpight of the grounds I had to think he had forſaken me, from the intelligence of the Baron di Cervia. I, therefore, ſaw no other courſe I could take, in my preſent circumſtances, than to go on with my profeſſion; in which I acquired great credit; and to prepare myſelf to ſet off for Leghorn, with Mr. Marbell's company, whither, within two month, at fartheſt, he intended to go.

My father, and mother, vehemently oppoſed my deſign: and, as if they had ſupported me by their induſtry, they preſumed to give me the law, inſtead of complying with my will. Mr. Marbell was obliged to ſhow them our contact, and to threaten them with ſuch meaſures as he ſhould find it moſt proper to take, if they pretended to offer me any violence, and force me to break my agreement with him. As my ill luck would have it, my father obſerved the condition

condition, which diſengaged me, in caſe of marriage: and, it was poſſible, the notice he took of that, might ſet his working head on contriving ſome plot againſt me, to render me miſerable, by fighting me with my own weapons. He did not ſpeak a word to me about the matter, for ſome days: and I concluded, that the neceſſity he found himſelf under, of yielding, made him quietly deſiſt from oppoſition.

He held council with the Baron di Cervia, with whom he was in very cloſe confidence: and, as the latter watched every opportunity to make a prey of me, they formed a plot truly diabolical; which had well nigh coſt me my life.

The reader will hardly imagine the Baron di Cervia ſo iniquitous as he really was, unleſs I give him a ſketch of his character.—He was one of thoſe, whoſe

bad hearts impell their weak heads, to adopt a few ſuperficial, incoherent notions; which the arogant blockheads call philoſophy: and, by which, they think themſelves intitled to commit the moſt daring wickedneſs. Under a very ſoft, and inſinuating manner, he couched a ſoul, ready to perpetrate any violence; to plunge into the deepeſt iniquity; and to glut itſelf with the moſt ſanguine revenge. He aſſociated only with people of his own ſtamp: and his lackey was his ſecretary, in conducting his blackeſt ſchemes; as he had found *his* ſoul equally proffligate with his own. What did he not do to hurt me with the public, only becauſe I honeſtly refuſed his addreſſes? What did he not do, as we ſhall ſee afterwards, to deprive me of Lord B——'s love: and, how ſhamefully did he uſe both him and me. I reſerve ſpeaking of that, till we have ſprung the mine of his

his malicious perfidy; which he would ſoon have ſet fire to himſelf; and by which I muſt have been inevitably deſtroyed, had not my good fortune intervened, and delivered me.

I ſhall only obſerve, at preſent, that he was not originally a gentlemen: that he had uſurped the title of the Baron di Cervia: that he lived ſplendidly, without any fund of his own; and was one of thoſe phenomena, who ſhine with light reflected, or ſtolen, from others. I could not find out how Lord B—— came to truſt him ſo far, as to recommend me to his protection: but I concluded, he had been, like many others, miſled by appearances; as it is frequently no difficult matter to deceive thoſe, who are incapable of deceit themſelves.

CHAP. VIII.

The Violence Roſara's Father makes uſe of, to force her into a Marriage; and the dreadful Conſequences which enſue.

THE conferences betwixt my father, and the Baron di Cervia, were not altogether unknown to me: but I could not ſee all the effects that would attend them. I, in vain, remonſtrated to him, that he was a man fatal to my quiet: and that, if I ſaw he continued his familiarity with him, I muſt live in continual ſuſpicion. I informed him of the cabal he had headed againſt me, to inſult me upon the ſtage. I likewiſe told him of his lackey, with whom he lived rather as a brother, than a maſter: becauſe, he was at the bottom

bottom of all his profligate ſchemes. This fellow had been ringleader to a ſet of vagabonds, who came to the theatre on purpoſe to raiſe a tumult when I was acting, and to drown my voice with their catcalls in the moſt intereſting paſſages of a character. This ſame fellow, made bold, by the favour of his maſter, had even preſumed to inſult me to my face: and I was obliged to bear with it quietly. For, as I was unable to avenge myſelf, I thought it was better to conceal my reſentment. He deſerved a beating from my father, inſtead of careſſes; and, to my great vexation, he took his part; as if the reputation of his brother had been at ſtake. As he could not give a direct anſwer to my complaints, he evaded them, by telling me that I was ill informed; and, that he knew very well how far to rely on thoſe, with whom he had to deal. He added, that he had not ſeen ſo much of

the world, that he might be allowed to be proof againſt fraud; and that, I was too much a girl to inſtruct an experienced man, like him. This was all I could get from him; and, it was a great mercy that he was not rougher with me.

Not many days paſſed, before he came to me in high ſpirits, when I was immerſed in my melancholy reflections. He frankly told me, that like a truly affectionate father, he had been thinking how to ſettle me in the world; and that, by the aſſiſtance of Providence, he now had it in his power to propoſe me a match, far ſuperior to what I could have expected. I could not give you, ſaid he to me, my deareſt daughter, I could not give you a more convincing proof than this, that I love you; and that I am your father. The match, which your good fortune offers you,

through

through my means, checks not the career of your theatrical glory; provided you think fit to profecute your profeſſion: but, if you think fit to leave it, you will be fixed in a very deſirable, and eaſy condition. I have found you a huſband, who rivals you in fame; and when you are his wife, he will glory to be excelled by you. His talents have made him celebrated over all Italy: and he is, likewiſe, very reſpectable, on account of his connections. As his paſſion for you hath almoſt robbed him of his underſtanding, you may conclude that he will make you a very affectionate, and faithful huſband. He is a gentleman, who is well acquainted with the world: diſcreet, complaiſant, and ſociable: conſequently, you may be aſſured, he will permit you to cultivate any innocent friendſhip that may entertain you, without doing you any prejudice. In ſhort, he is juſt ſuch a one

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as ſuits you; juſt ſuch a one, as I was wiſhing for you; ſuch a one, as I only expected to find, beyond the mountains, where genuine good taſte has undoubtedly taken the deepeſt root; ſince the little of it that flouriſhes amongſt us, has been tranſplanted from thence.

Under this harangue, I diſcovered the fool, and the reprobate. It did not at all ſurprize me; for I was but too well acquainted with his diſpoſition. I expected yet, to hear ſomething finer: and pray, ſir, replied I, who may this incomparable huſband be, whom you intend for me? And I ſaid ſo, not becauſe I had the leaſt deſign to ſecond his inclination, but merely to ſee to what pitch of extravagance he was capable of reaching. I was enraged beyond expreſſion, when he propoſed to me Don Capoſtorno for a huſband; and propoſed him to me ſo determinately,

nately, that I foreſaw a dreadful ſtorm, if I had refuſed him, as I was at firſt prompted to do, both by vanity, and love. Luckily for me, I had calmneſs enough to receive the propoſal with a ſhrug, and a laugh. I knew that his practices were ſuch, as might make a ſtone bluſh: and, I ſhuddered at the very thought, of his preſuming to be my husband. His parentage, was as infamous as his conduct. In his travels through France, and Germany, he had acquired a ſmattering of letters, which had only ſerved to make him a vain-glorious, ignorant, vulgar pedant. He affected a ſmartneſs, with the air of a porter: and, he ſet up for a man of expence, at the very time, he was ſtarving. Terrible would have been my fate, if I had then exhibited to my father this advantageous picture of the perſon he had pitched upon for me to marry. It would have been applying

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a fuzee to a barrel of powder, and ſetting the houſe on fire about our ears, before we could have cried out for help. I made no reply to my father's offer: and he looked upon my ſilence, as a ſubmiſſion to his will. As ſoon as he left me, I ſent for Don Cirillo, and Mr. Marbell, to have their advice. They both were of opinion that I ſhould not ſuffer violence to be offered me in an affair which determined my condition for life: but for this precaution there was not any occaſion, as I would rather have ſuffered death, than accepted ſuch a match. All the difficulty lay in finding the eaſieſt method to avoid it: for we ſuppoſed, as the fact was, that that the Baron di Cervia was the principal actor in this ſcheme; who, if I was once married to his favourite, would be ſure of having me fully in his power. Mr. Marbell undertook to ſpeak to my father, and to ſhow him, how groſly he

was

was miſtaken. Don Cirillo went immediately to inform the miniſtry, of my ſituation, and to ſeek protection in the interpoſition of royal authority.

He returned in half an hour, with ſuch gaiety in his looks, that it gave me hopes of ſome comfort. The comfort, indeed, was very great; but not of the nature I expected. Cheer up, madam, ſaid he to me, I have this moment received moſt certain information from Paſermo, not only that your friend Lord B——, is yet unmarried, but that he, likewiſe, ſet out ſome days ago for this city, to ſatisfy himſelf in ſome ſuſpicions, which he had with regard to your conduct; and it is ſuppoſed that he is now here.

How?—When?—Is it poſſible?—I then cried: I would have ſaid a thouſand things at once; and, I was at a loſs to

to find time to expreſs any thing.—Is Lord B——, not married?—Has Lord B—— left Palermo?—Is it ſuppoſed that Lord B——, is, at preſent, in Naples, full of jealouſies, and fears for his unhappy Roſara?—Ah! if this be true, I fear not my father: I fear not the Baron di Cervia; I fear not the whole world. Nay, I ſhould not be afraid of death himſelf; if he durſt face me, in my preſent triumph. But how can this be, my deareſt Don Cirillo, how can this be? Since I have not received a letter from him for four months; and ſince his marriage was even publiſhed in the gazettes?—So it is, replied he; I have juſt now received a letter from Sicily, directed to a friend of mine; becauſe, as I got no anſwer to others, which I had written thither, on the ſame ſubject, I ſuſpected they were intercepted. The letter was as clear as poſſible: and this is a copy of it.

My

'*My dearest Friend*,

'HOW it happens I cannot conceive, 'that you have not received two 'letters from me, in answer to two 'of yours on the same subject; for 'I sent them off with great care. I 'intrusted the Express with them; and 'charged him to deliver them, into 'your own hand, as you desired me: 'I answer you, for the third time, that 'it is so far from being true, that Lord 'B—— is married, that I may venture 'to assure you, he never will marry, 'during the life of the Marchioness, 'his mother: as a lady of her charac-'ter would never endure a daugh-'ter-in-law in the house with her; who, 'might interfere with her peculiar, and 'formal manner of living. Without 'asking you why you have made this 'repeated enquiry, I think I can guess

'the

'the reaſon; for I know very well how 'warmly that nobleman was intereſted 'for Roſara, who is now ſo famous in 'your theatre, while ſhe ſtayed at Pa-'lermo. Obſerve how different the o-'pinions of the world are. In Naples, 'it is given out, that Lord B—— is 'married: and, on the contrary, it is 'talked, in Palermo, that he is gone 'thither to take a wife; as he ſet off 'for that place, a day or two ago; but, 'perhaps, on ſome buſineſs of quite a 'different nature. In fact, I am cer-'tain he will arrive at Naples, before 'my letter can reach you: and you will 'have an opportunity to get perſonal 'information of a truth, which you are 'ſollicitous to know. Pray command 'me, whenever I can ſerve you; and 'believe me ever,

'Yours &c.'

'N——.'

This

This letter ſufficed to recall me from death to life; to make me forget the mad project of my father, and make me re-kindle my former hopes. My latent paſſion was rouzed again in my breaſt, and grew as warm as ever: and I was within a very little of diſcovering it to all the houſe. Don Cirillo had a good deal of difficulty to manage me, in the firſt tranſports of my joy. My father, who, to make my happineſs as tranſitory as a dream, came in, a little after I had heard the tidings, and perceived my extacy. He ſeemed ſo peeviſh, and diſconcerted, that I was afraid he had got ſome intelligence of my patron's arrival; who, without doubt, might put a ſtop to his ridiculous pretenſions. I was confirmed in my ſuſpicion, when he aſked me, in a more blunt manner than uſual, if I had yet reſolved to accept of the match he had propoſed to me; adding, with oaths and imprecations,

tions, that he would only give me a night more to think of it.

Unhappy wretch that I am, thought I to myſelf! I have too little time to make my caſe known to Lord B——. But, ſuppoſe I ſhould have it in my power to make him acquainted with it, can I be ſure that he will undertake my juſt defence? Ah! if he had loved me, as he once did, I ſhould have ſeen him before now: and before now my fate would have been determined. His ſilence, of ſo many months, and his preſent neglect, fully convince me, that he thinks no more of his unhappy Roſara; and that, whether he is in Naples, or not, I am equally condemned to be for ever miſerable.——Here my heart froze within me; my underſtanding was darkened; my ſpirits were ſunk in a melancholy langour; and the objects that preſented themſelves to my imagination,

ation, ſtruck me with ſuch a pannick, that I knew not where I was, nor what I did. I paſſed the remainder of that gloomy day in a kind of delirium: and, thus oppreſſed, and harraſſed, as my mind was, I laid myſelf down upon my bed, in the evening; but, without being able to procure any reſt: for nature, through all my frame, ſeemed to preſage the calamity, which was ſoon to befall me.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Roſara's Life in imminent Danger:—— recovered through an unexpected Accident.

THE obſtinacy of my father; the malice of the Baron di Cervia; the delay of Lord B——, and my own confuſion, were all objects that added horror to the darkneſs of that night, which, to me, was big with danger, and my fate. As I was, every moment, afraid of ſome violent attack upon my liberty, I could not think of putting off my cloaths, and going to bed: for my heart foretold me, that I ſhould be diſturbed from my ſleep, by ſome diſaſter. While I was awake and on foot, I was better prepared for my defence: or, in caſe

caſe of a ſurprize, I could betake myſelf to flight. Having, therefore, locked myſelf in, I walked about my room, with ſuch wild and uneven ſteps, that whoever had ſeen me, would have gueſſed at the melancholy and confuſion of my mind. My chamber adjoined to a little terrace, with ſaſhes round it, which looked down upon a bay of the ſea, that waſhed in below. This terrace was ſupported by an arch, under which ran a ſtreet: but, betwixt the arch and the terrace, there was another ſtory, where Mr. Marbell dwelt: ſo that it was a conſiderable height from the ground. I walked for a full hour on this terrace, indulging my melancholy, by the light of the moon. It was a ſerene, delightful night, ſuch as we generally have, in the beginning of autumn. My long and quick exerciſe, the fatigue of my mind, the place itſelf, and the quiet, ſtill, and lonely hour, all conſpired, by de-

grees, to make me turn drowſy. As I now found my legs almoſt unable to ſupport me, I threw myſelf down upon the bed, with my cloaths on: and, in ſpite of my diſtreſs, I ſoon fell into a profound ſleep. From my infancy I had been ſubject to an indiſpoſition, which had given myſelf, and my friends, much concern. I often uſed to get up in my ſleep, and walk about the houſe; nay, even go out of it, if I found the door open. On thoſe occaſions, I went about, juſt as if I had been awake; and frequently did what I was uſed to do in the day time. There are many perſons who walk thus in their ſleep. I myſelf have known ſeveral ſubject to this inconvenience, which is often attended with very fatal conſequences—Imagination, which actuates us, even while we ſleep, has ſuch influence over our ſenſes, that it governs them at pleaſure, and gives birth to our ideas; though,

though, as it operates by habit, and without any reflexion, it neither apprehends, ſees, or hears, nor has a diſtinct perception of what it does. This defect in my conſtitution, was diſcovered at Mr. Greenland's, where they, likewiſe, thought of a remedy for it; which did me great ſervice. When I went to bed, I tied a cord to one of my feet, faſtening it, at the ſame time, to a foot of the bed. Thus, when the ill habit of riſing in the night came upon me, after I had made the few ſteps on the floor, which the length of my cord permitted me, it checked me, and I fell down: and, being awaked by the fall, I was made ſenſible of my danger, and went to bed again. I had been ſo often rouzed from my ſleep, in this manner, that, at laſt, nature, who may be inured to good, as well as ill, dropped this irregularity, by degrees: and I had not then been ſubject to it for two

years. As I had been thus long free from this inconvenience, I was ſo fully ſatisfied, that I ſhould not ſuffer it again, that I had, in a manner, forgot I had ever been liable to it. That fatal night had ſo irritated my fancy, however, that my old misfortune returned upon me. The tumult of my mind had, perhaps, put my humours into a more violent agitation than ever. The diſmal objects of the preceding day, had taken ſuch hold of my faculties, that ſleep itſelf could not efface their impreſſion. In ſhort, whatever was the cauſe, in my ſleep, I fancied myſelf awake, and that ſtrange incidents befell me.

Whether it was a dream, or a delirium, I thought my father ſtood before me, with a dagger in his hand, and put the diſagreeable alternative to me—either marriage, or death. I thought, that,

that, a little before, I had heard the voice of Don Capoſtorno, and the Baron di Cervia; who were propoſing to take me to a houſe in the country, where they would have me entirely at their diſpoſal. I thought I was in this ſame country-houſe, abandoned by the whole world, and in the power of my mercileſs enemies, with no defence but my honour; which determined me rather to die, than yield to their profligate deſires. I cried out, and wept, as I had done at other times: and my bed-cloaths were not only found bedewed with my tears, but, likewiſe, torn in many places, by the violent defence I fancied I was making againſt my aſſailants. What followed? — In the height of my deſpair, I ſprung out of bed, to fly from my purſuers. Without knowing what I did, I ran to the terrace, above-mentioned, of which I had left the door open. I threw open

one of its windows, leapt from it, and fell into the ſea. The dreadfulneſs of the leap, makes me yet ſhudder, while I am giving an account of it. In imagining, at preſent, the height of the place, and the depth of the water below, a chillneſs runs through my veins, and my head ſwims, as though I was going to repeat the act. I will not preſume to ſay what thoughts then paſſed in my mind; and what impreſſion death made upon me, into whoſe arms I had ſo reſolutely thrown myſelf; becauſe I was aſleep at the time: nor can I give that minute account of a dream, which thoſe generous readers would wiſh, who may be diſpoſed to honor me with their compaſſion. I well know, I plunged into the water. I went even to the bottom; and ſwam a little, by ſome natural efforts, to ſave myſelf from drowning. But all this appeared to me ſtill a dream: nor did it much terrify

terrify me: becauſe I was more frightened at the Baron di Cervia; who, to my fancy, was ſtill in cloſe purſuit of me. The leap, the water, and my dread, it is probable, awoke me: but then, I muſt have paſſed from ſleep, to a profounder lethargy, which took my ſenſes from me; and, conſequently, prevented me from knowing any thing of my ſituation. But, I very diſtinctly remember, that, when I came to myſelf, I was in a ſtrange bed, and chamber: and, what is ſtill more extraordinary, I found myſelf, as it were, in the arms of Lord B——, who was ſitting by the bed-ſide, and weeping bitterly.

How was I ſtruck, at this change of ſcene, which, at firſt, I thought a dream more pleaſing than my eſcape from the former; or an enchantment. I bore no other marks of what had happened

except a ſoreneſs over my whole body, a ſickneſs at my ſtomach, and a ſenſe of coldneſs in my limbs, as if I had had an ague upon me, for ſome days. However, as ſoon as I opened my eyes, and was come to myſelf, I ſat up in the bed, to examine the place I was in, and the people I had got amongſt. Where am I, and what do I ſee, ſaid I, in a languid voice? I was not able to ſay more.—You are in the hands of friends, replied Lord B——: you are in the hands of one who loves you; though you have done all you could to merit his reſentment. But this is not a time for me to vent my anger, nor for you to juſtify yourſelf. Take care of yourſelf at preſent: endeavour to recover your ſtrength, and to divert your imagination, from dwelling on a danger, from which your good fortune hath reſcued you, by an extraordinary combination of accidents; ſuch as is rarely to be met with

with, even in romance. Conſider, that you are here in my houſe, and that you are under the eye of my mother herſelf; who would be one of your moſt implacable enemies, if ſhe ſhould know that you are the object of my tenderneſs. Let this hint ſerve to direct you in your words, and conduct. Let it never tranſpire, that you knew me at Palermo; or, that you were ever there. Account for your misfortune, to her, as you ſhall think proper yourſelf: for, as ſhe lives quite retired, from any commerce with the world, ſhe knows nothing of the theatre: and, likewiſe, the melancholy accident, which hath befallen you, will make her the more ready to liſten to, and compaſſionate, your ſtory. I will inform you of the reſt, at a more ſeaſonable time: mean while, think only of recovering from your fright, and from the injury which may be done to your health: every thing

except a ſoreneſs over my whole body, a ſickneſs at my ſtomach, and a ſenſe of coldneſs in my limbs, as if I had had an ague upon me, for ſome days. However, as ſoon as I opened my eyes, and was come to myſelf, I ſat up in the bed, to examine the place I was in, and the people I had got amongſt. Where am I, and what do I ſee, ſaid I, in a languid voice? I was not able to ſay more.—You are in the hands of friends, replied Lord B——: you are in the hands of one who loves you; though you have done all you could to merit his reſentment. But this is not a time for me to vent my anger, nor for you to juſtify yourſelf. Take care of yourſelf at preſent: endeavour to recover your ſtrength, and to divert your imagination, from dwelling on a danger, from which your good fortune hath reſcued you, by an extraordinary combination of accidents; ſuch as is rarely to be met with

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elſe, that may be conducive to your happineſs, ſhall be my care, when I find you diſpoſed to correct your weakneſſes, and to be faithful in love.

Here the Count ſtopped, and went away, without giving me time to anſwer: and I remained in greater perplexity than ever; as I knew not the drift of what he had been ſaying. What could thoſe injuries be, which he complained he had received from me? How long had the Marchioneſs, his mother, and he, been in Naples? How was I brought to their houſe, without her knowing that her ſon was in love with me? All theſe circumſtances were ſo many enigmas, which made me wiſh I had received a fuller explanation: but that explanation was then withheld from me; and, as the affair was not cleared up to me, I did not think I was ſo ſtrongly obliged to be cautious.

But,

But, on reflecting more maturely, I found it neceſſary to ſubmit to the will of him, who had ſuch influence over my ſoul; and wait patiently for the iſſue of the matter. As I was obliged to conceal the true ſtate of the caſe, I found I was under a neceſſity of inventventing a ſtory, with all the air of veracity, that I might not hurt my reputation, when I was endeavouring to procure protection. This, then, I ſet about, with as much art, as the diſturbance of my mind, and the diſorder of my body permitted me. It was ſome time before I was able to recover from my amazement, and reflect how much I owed to fortune, who had delivered me in my ſleep, from the gloomy circumſtances of the preceding day, and placed me in ſo different a ſituation. But, to ſpeak my more ſerious thoughts, I attributed my eſcape from violence and death, to the ſaving hand of Heaven.

The reader will, perhaps, allow, that Providence interpoſed in my favour, if he will be kind enough to have patience till I let him into the full knowledge of a fact, of which I have, hitherto, given him but a confuſed idea. But, in ſuſpending this account, I conſulted his completer ſatisfaction.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

The Treachery of the Baron di Cervia diſcovered.——The Precautions Lord B——— takes to keep Roſara with him.

THE world abounds with people, who live in it, without knowing it: and who look upon common events as prodigies; which on account of their frequency, deſerve not the leaſt attention. How many are there, who think, ſome circumſtances, in the life of another, incredible; only, becauſe they have not happened to themſelves; and treat certain narratives as romances, and repugnant to the uſual diſpoſitions of nature, merely, becauſe they exceed the bounds of their limited underſtandings.

Wonder

Wonder is often the mother of knowledge: but, it is always the child of ignorance. It is not enough that things are ſurprizing, to rank them with the number of fables: for, ſurprize generally ſprings from inattention, and from ſlender acquaintance with the human viciſſitudes. Such circumſtances are often combined in a moment; as we could not have aſſociated, by years of induſtry. We may meet with great and extraordinary ſtrokes of fortune; though we are not great people ourſelves: for the moſt abject perſons have their parts, on the great ſtage of the world: and their comedy, or their tragedy, may be very intereſting. All the difference is, that the great are more ſeen than the little. If a tower be ſtruck with thunder, the accident is taken notice of, by every body: whereas, if a rural hut ſuffers the ſame fate, it is altogether unregarded by the public: it

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is a poor ſtructure, and it periſheth in ſhades and ſolitude. The adventures of the great acquire weight, and name, by being publicly ſpoken of, and by receiving embelliſhments, as they are handed from one to another. Whereas, thoſe of the lower ſort, as they intereſt not public curioſity, remain buried in their original ſilence, and obſcurity. The occurrences, however, that befall the latter, may be as intereſting as thoſe of the former; and as entertaining and inſtructive to thoſe who read them.

Let my reader ſtrip himſelf of this great, univerſal prejudice, and he will find, that the critical accident, of which I lately gave him an account, would have been complete in all its parts, if it had but happened to a Princeſs, or a Queen, inſtead of a poor cemedian, who had not importance enough to draw the eager attention of the world. Whether

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it appears credible, or no, to the reader, I can aſſure him that it is very true: and ſo he will find it, who will be at the pains, after having read theſe Memoirs, to inform himſelf of all their circumſtances. Even I, myſelf, thought there was inchantment in the caſe, when I found my change, from my poor little room, to a magnificent palace;—from the horrible ſituation I was lately in, to a ſtate of eaſe and affluence;—and, from the arms of death, to thoſe of Lord B——, whom I thought I had irreparably loſt. I might have thought as much as I pleaſed, how all this had happened; but I ſhould never have found it out, had not my lover unravelled the myſtery to me.

He had left me, to prevent his mother's taking any ſuſpicion from his too great aſſiduity: and I was ſtudying with myſelf, how I ſhould behave to her,

her, ſo as not to forfeit her protection: when her ſon returned, of a ſudden, and ſaid—Thanks be to Heaven, my mother is juſt gone to her devotion; and we may now converſe freely together for, at leaſt, two hours. To give me an account of yourſelf, at preſent, might put you to too much pain; therefore, I will be before-hand with you, and give you a relation of my conduct: by which means you will learn, what grounds I have to complain of you, and how much reaſon you have to be ſatisfied with me.

When you were going to leave Palermo, I deſired you to convey your letters to me, through the hands of the Baron di Cervia; through which channel I, likewiſe, told you I would ſend mine to you, for many urgent reaſons. I knew this gentleman about ſix years ago at Rome; where he made a fignre, ſuitable

able to his birth: and I thought him a perſon, who deſerved my moſt unlimited confidence. As I knew that he had gone to Naples, meerly for his pleaſure, I thought he was the propereſt perſon, to whom I could recommend the care of you: for, as he had no alliance in the kingdom, it ſeemed that my ſecret would be moſt ſafely depoſited with him. Another, I thought, might be ſeduced, either by his being related to my mother, or, by his connexions at court, to diſcloſe a ſecret. which was of more conſequence to me, than my life. But he, whom I had aſſiſted in like circumſtances, could not refuſe me his good offices, and fidelity. As I put a moſt full, and unlimited confidence in him, I opened my whole heart to him, and repeatedly recommended you to his protection. I could not ſuſpect, from his anſwers, that he harboured bad intentions, though I re-

ceived no letters from you. He wrote to me, that the extreme ſubjection, in which you were kept, by the people of the houſe, and by your mother, did not allow you a moment of liberty, not even to write: and that, as you was reſtricted from writing, the better to ſecond my political caution, you begged of me to accept the apology he would make for you; and, as a lover, to compaſſionate the reſtraint you lay under. Finding that you were applauded, tender, and faithful, I was not at all alarmed at the bills, which the Baron di Cervia drew upon me, from time to time, for money, to ſupply you with what you wanted. Since you have been here, I have, at leaſt, remitted him two hundred piſtoles. He uſed always to acknowledge the receipt of the money, and inform me how it was expended for your uſe.

I had a thorough confidence in his honour: therefore, I could have no ſuſpicion of him. He began to inſinuate to me, that you were turning inconſtant:—he told me of the cloſe friendſhip you had contracted with Don Cirillo; whom I knew only by name:—he added, that you had often affronted him, through this gentleman's influence with you:—he aſſured me, that, in order to put your heart to the proof, he had ſuggeſted to you a way of writing to me:—that, you neglected it, and dropped enquiring for me, as if I had been a perſon you had never known. An amorous paſſion is apt to create fears, and jealouſies, where there is no foundation for them: it lives upon its own torment. The weakneſs of your ſex, and the intelligence given me, by the Baron di Cervia, conſidered, I did not think my ſuſpicions, and jealouſies, were altogether without grounds. I deſired him

him to watch over your conduct with the ſtricteſt attention: but, as every letter brought me ſome worſe accounts of you, I ſwore to him, that I would uſe my utmoſt efforts to blot you out of my remembrance. I know not, whether or no he acquainted you with my reſolution: I know very well, that I did my utmoſt to conquer my love for you; and that he urged me on to execute what I had determined, by deſcribing you as a perſon whom he had quite given over; as one who ſacrificed, to licentious practices, your fortune and your fame. I was reduced to that extremity of deſpair, which often agitates forſaken lovers, when my mother found herſelf obliged to come to Naples, on account of her niece's marriage, who is one of the ladies of this court: and ſhe choſe that I ſhould attend her. We have not, as yet been two days in town:

and

and, on our return, laſt night, from my couſin's houſe to our own, as we paſſed in the coach along the Canal, ſo well known to you; by the favour of the calmneſs of the night, we heard a noiſe in the water, as that of a perſon, who had fallen into it: and, by the light of the moon, we diſcovered your cloaths floating, which we immediately concluded to be the cloaths of a woman, who would ſoon be drowned, by the ſtrength of the current, if ſhe had not immediate aſſiſtance. My mother, terrified, and ſtimulated, by the ſenſibility of a heart, which feels, even for the death of a fly, cried out to our ſervants to ſee what was the matter; and to lend you all poſſible help. One of my footmen, more daring than the reſt, jumped into the water: and, having catched hold of you by your cloaths, made ſuch good uſe of his hands, and

feet,

feet, that he drew you to the ſhoar, where the coach was ſtopped. I got out, to ſee if there were any ſigns of life in you: for, at that time you ſhowed none:——but, good God! how was I ſtunned, when I knew it to be you! and ſoon did I know you, though you looked pale, and lifeleſs. I had almoſt betrayed myſelf, by giving a deſperate ſcream: the horrible accident crouded upon my mind a hundred thoughts at once: but that of concealing who you were, to prevent diſagreeable conſequences, was not the leaſt, or moſt indiſtinct. Your pulſe and reſpiration, ſatisfied us, that you had life; though your vital functions were oppreſſed. Mere humanity luckily accounted for my confuſion, and aſſiduities. For, a man muſt be of ſtone, who is not moved, on ſuch occaſions. My mother wanted no inſtigation to make

make her pity a woman in ſuch a condition. As ſhe knew not what might be the cauſe of your misfortune, ſhe prayed to heaven, that her coming might be timely enough to preſerve your life. She ordered you to be placed in the coach, as much at your eaſe, as poſſible. Thus, dropping with water, we brought you home, and you were laid in this bed, where all poſſible means were uſed to bring you to your ſenſes. In this melancholy occupation, almoſt the whole night was taken up. My mother, in the mean time, unable to take any reſt, but ſending, every now and then, to aſk how you did. As for me, I never left your bed-ſide: I made the anxiety of my mother a pretext for my own. In Heaven's good time, you have, at length, come to yourſelf, and given me new life. A phyſician will ſoon be here, to take that care of you, which

which the ſhock of your frame received laſt night, and the alteration it may have cauſed in your habit, render neceſſary. What I am chiefly eager for, is, to ſee you out of danger, and, to hear, from your own mouth, how the terrible accident happened, which brought you ſo near the gates of death. Do not, my deareſt Roſara, be at the trouble of acquitting yourſelf to me, by an artful defence. For I could excuſe you any fault, if you were even culpable: and if you are not culpable, your conduct ſtands in no need of a laboured juſtification. Speak to me ſimply, and ingenuouſly; ſince my mother's abſence gives us theſe precious moments to ourſelves. But I beg you may not give yourſelf the leaſt diſturbance: for, to make you eaſy, I am even ready to ſacrifice my paſſion; provided is ſhould be diſagree-

able to you, or make you have recourſe to falſhood.

Here the Count was ſilent; and his laſt words were accompanied with a tender tear, which he endeavoured to hide from me: but I obſerved it, and returned it with the moſt heart-felt emotion. His diſcourſe had ſo ſurprized me, by diſcovering to me many things, of which I had not before the leaſt idea, that I knew not where to begin to ſatisfy his enquiry. I found I was betrayed, by the Baron di Cervia, in the moſt barbarous manner, that perfidy could deviſe, without being able to convict him of his treachery, which, to me, had ſtill ſomething myſterious in it. I often attempted to give Lord B—— an anſwer; but could not proceed. I, firſt of all, found it neceſſary to give a free courſe to my tears; that my

my mind, when leſs oppreſſed with its load of grief, might have the freer uſe of its faculties. When my ſpirits were ſomewhat compoſed, I delivered my anſwer, in the order which my lover had deſired; as I ſhall ſoon inform the reader.

CHAP. XI.

Roſara vindicates her Conduct to Lord B——. The Meaſures propoſed to be obſerved with Lord B——'s Mother.

I BEGAN with the ſtrange act of throwing myſelf out of the window; wherein I ran ſuch a riſk of loſing my life, either by being cruſhed to pieces, or drowned. I could only give him an account of it, as of a dream, of which ſome faint and confuſed traces remained upon my memory. I was, indeed, very ſenſible of the cauſes, which had driven me upon this diſaſter: and, when I had explained them, as particularly as I could, to my patron, I obſerved, that they might naturally enough produce that dreadful effect; as I had formerly been ſubject to walk in my ſleep. In looking

looking back on the couduct of the Baron di Cervia with regard to us both, we found it ſo myſterious, and unaccountable, that we could not form any determinate judgment concerning it. How was it poſſible, that a man ſhould be ſo artful in the immediate conduct of a plot, and, at the ſame time, ſo ſtupid, as not to perceive, that Lord B—— would, ſome time or other, diſcover it; and might probably call him to a ſevere account for it? They had not, as yet had an interview, ſince the arrival of my patron, in Naples: becauſe nobody could tell where he dwelt: nor could he find him at the houſe, at which he had deſired him, in his letters, to direct for him. How would the Baron di Cervia be able to clear himſelf of villainy, when I could ſo eaſily give convincing proofs of my fidelity?

My connexion with Don Cirillo gave me not the leaſt uneaſineſs: for it was eaſy to ſatisfy my lover that it exceeded not the bounds of friendſhip. I had no need to dwell long upon this article: for truth can convince without elaborate argument: it carries a forcible, and commanding eloquence along with it. I found it much more difficult to aſſuage the Count in the affair of the Baron di Cervia, and keep him from being too far tranſported by paſſion. He ſaid, he would immediately go in queſt of him, and make him give an exact account of the letters he had ſent him, and the money he had received from him; of which money I had never got the leaſt intimation: and the homely condition in which he found me, was a ſtrong proof that it had never come to my hands. He promiſed to be ſo much maſter of himſelf, that he would not make me the talk of the town: but he

he inſiſted upon being left at full liberty to vindicate my injured honour.

From theſe paſt events, we went on to talk over the preſent poſture of our affairs: and it was agreed on betwixt us that I was under an abſolute neceſſity of having recourſe to fiction, to avoid giving his mother a true account of myſelf. As long as ſhe knew not that I was the dancer of Palermo, I might hope every thing from her protection: but, if ſhe once came to the knowledge of that circumſtance, it was very natural to imagine, that the ſuſpicions would again awake, which malicious tongues had formerly raiſed in her mind. It was very eaſy to make an innocent fraud paſs with her; becauſe ſhe lived entirely ſequeſtered from the world: and nobody could give her my hiſtory, as nobody knew that I lived with her.

My late accident would certainly occaſion a good deal of noiſe in Naples; and would give riſe to a thouſand conjectures: eſpecially, as I was not to be found. Firſt of all, it would be readily concluded that I was dead. The heigth of the window, from which I leaped; the deep canal that flowed under the terraſs; the door of my room, which would be found ſhut; the night, the ſeaſon of ſilence, and melancholy; and the aggravating circumſtances, which went before, would all tend to perſuade the publick, that I had thrown myſelf headlong down, in an act of deſpair; and that my body, carried off by the waves, had been deprived of the common rites of burial.

This being ſuppoſed, we thought it was beſt for us to keep the world in the opinion that Roſara was dead, and to deſcribe my caſe in ſuch a manner to the

the marchioneſs, as would make her continue to protect me in her houſe: as if I was no longer amongſt the living; and as if there was no perſon that would be concerned about my fate. If ſhe ſhould hear any thing reſpecting Roſara the actreſs, who could not be found, we might eaſily give her to underſtand, that ſhe was only of the ſame name, with the dancer at Palermo; and that ſhe was driven to this deſperate ſtep, either by ſome violence offered her, which we might feign for our purpoſe; or by a fit of deſpair, at ſeeing herſelf obliged to follow a profeſſion, which kept her employed in the world, whilſt her pious thoughts inclined her to retirement, and ſolitude. This was an artifice we might eaſily put upon ſo a devout lady: and thus ſecure to myſelf an aſylum in a houſe, where I ſhould always be under the ſame roof with my lover; if I could but conceal my paſſion for him. Our

plan could not be better laid; and the Count was ſo well pleaſed with his contrivance, that he thanked Heaven for the event, which had brought it about, as an accident that would make him unſpeakably happy.

The town was, in fact, ſoon full of of my death, and very different were the conjectures about its cauſe, according to the different accounts people had heard of me. My father, and mother, it ſeems, were ſo imprudent in their grief, as to diſcover that the blame was chiefly to be laid at their door. Had the belief of my death done me no other good than to rid me of their extravagancies, I ſhould have been very much beholden to it. It is true, I was now obliged to lead a life extremely inſipid, and diſagreeable to me, in point of being totally ſequeſtred from the world: a great change,

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to a perſon, who had been uſed ſo much, as I had, to a peculiar public way of life. But, I thought, I poſſeſſed every thing in Lord B——'s love: and his preſence made amends to me for the want of every other amuſement.

If I was uneaſy on any account, in my preſent circumſtances, it was for the friendſhip of Don Cirillo, who, I knew very well, would be extremely afflicted at my misfortune; as I was ſenſible he had a ſincere, and warm eſteem for me. Time, however, alleviated, in ſome degree, my uneaſineſs on that ſcore: but I, nevertheleſs, diſcloſed it to my patron: ſo honeſtly did I act towards him; and ſo untainted were the profeſſions I made him, with any diſſimulation. As we were in the midſt of of a converſation on this ſubject, the Marchioneſs entered, and expreſſed the higheſt joy at ſeeing me ſo much better,

of which ſhe gave me a proof, by a moſt affectionate ſalute. She aſked me if I had ſeen the phyſician, whom ſhe had ſent for to viſit me: but I told her I had not the leaſt occaſion for him; and I did ſo, becauſe I was afraid of being known by him, if he ſhould ſee me. As good luck would have it, Lord B——, and his mother, had only four men ſervants in the houſe, whom they had brought along with them from Palermo; and who had not the leaſt knowledge of me: as the conſtant attendance they were obliged to give, on ſo ſolitary a lady, allowed them no opportunities of frequenting the theatre.

Though my late accident had done me a great deal of hurt, yet I hoped to overcome it, without the aid of a phyſician: for love was my phyſician; and, indeed, it recovered me faſter, than I could myſelf have ſuppoſed it would.

The

The Marchioneſs, ſeeing my averſion to medical preſcriptions, was willing to let my recovery go on in my own way. She then aſked me, how my misfortune had happened; and here the Count her ſon, fearing, leſt I ſhould not keep up to his intentions, thus addreſſed her for me.

Upon this, madam, we were juſt diſcourſing when you came in. It is ſo ſtrange and wonderful a caſe, that I am ſurprized you have not heard of it where you have been; becauſe it muſt be matter of converſation to the moſt exemplary perſons, as an act of ancient virtue. This young woman, who got her bread upon the ſtage, has gone by different names, as it is cuſtomary with people of that profeſſion: but her real name is Lucretia; and, according to the account ſhe has given me of herſelf, ſhe is worthy of that name, by reaſon of

of her ſingular virtue. Every profeſſion, has its heroines: and virtue has ſuch force upon minds, which are ſtrongly impreſſed by its charms, that it can raiſe people into prodigies, who have had the pooreſt opportunities. Here is one of theſe prodigies, madam, whom you will find intitled to your love, as ſhe has excited my admiration. A gentleman of this city, whom I ſhall forbear naming, that I may ſhock you the leſs, grew ſo enamoured of this worthy girl, that he bribed her barbarous, and profligate father, to give her up to his licentious will. I ſhall not lead you into the particulars of this ſhocking tale, that I may ſpare your bluſhes for the baſeneſs of mankind. One night the poor girl, when ſhe was juſt going to be ſeized in her chamber by her lover, and her father, as ſhe had no other way to eſcape, was reſolved to ſacrifice her life,

to her honour, and threw herſelf, from a balcony into the ſea; where, ſhe muſt have ſoon periſhed, if we had not opportunely come to her aſſiſtance. The world, it is likely, will believe that ſhe is dead, and I would have them believe it: as that ſuppoſition will put it more eaſily in our power, to exerciſe our humanity towards her: it will enable us to keep her concealed from her perſecutors; and it will ſkreen us from thoſe inconveniencies, we ſhould be expoſed to, if it was known that ſhe was with us. She is content to live, unknown to the whole world, if ſhe can but be honoured with your protection. You need not be incited to ſhelter, and cheriſh virtue; but ſuppoſe you wanted to be ſollicited, my intreaties, I flatter myſelf, and her tears, would plead ſtrongly with you.

To this eloquence of the Count's, which ſerved as a rule to conduct myſelf in my innocent fraud, I, likewiſe, added my very warm petition:—but, indeed, ſhe wanted not much intreaty. Surprized at a magnanimous act of virtue, which, in the ground of the ſtory was true, though embelliſhed with that poetical colouring, which was requiſite in my circumſtances, ſhe praiſed me, ſhe bleſſed me, ſhe promiſed me in her houſe all maternal protection. Then it was I told her why I had refuſed the aſſiſtance of the phyſicians: becauſe I was afraid that their knowing me might make me loſe my aſylum in her houſe, which I preferred to all earthly felicity. Tranſported with thoſe virtuous, and affectionate expreſſions, ſhe beſtowed her pious kiſſes upon me, and declared that ſhe would not loſe ſo fair an opportunity of preſerving a girl in danger; ſince

ſince Heaven, by an abſolute miracle, had made her its inſtrument, to ſave her. With this kind aſſurance, ſhe left me; and her ſon followed her, to go in queſt of the Baron di Cervia, who was deſtined, that very day, to give, by his deſpair, a ſtriking, and terrible proof of my perſecuted innocence.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

A tragical Accident befalls the Baron di Cervia; which removes Lord B——'s Suſpicions, reſpecting Roſara's Conduct.

WHEN I was alone, I began, firſt of all, to reflect on the ſtrange combinations of human fortune; which had given me a ray of my ſo much deſired felicity; after I had done all I could myſelf, to be unhappy for ever. Under what conſtellation muſt I have been born, which made me paſs, by a ſeries of tumultuous viciſſitudes, from evil to good, and from death to life?—— It muſt be owned, though the world thought me dead, I was, nevertheleſs, in a better condition than I had been in the

the day before. Protected in the houſe of a rich, and powerful lady:—under the ſame roof, with a generous lover, who had done me the honour, to promiſe he would make me his wife:—provided, abundantly, with whatever I ſtood in need of; without being obliged to court the applauſe of the public for bread; who give their favour, and take it away, very often, without cauſe; and whoſe inſtability, and caprice, gives law, without the interference of reaſon:——freed from the ſubjection of a father and a mother, who ſtudied, night and day, the readieſt means to ruin me:——without fear of the cenſure of the world, which is frequently the tyrant of our will; and, perhaps, as often gives a ſtab, as a ſupport to virtue:——in ſhort, without anxiety for the future; which principally depended on my dexterity, and good con-

conduct:—what human bleſſing could I now deſire more?

All the difficulty of my ſituation conſiſted, in having art enough to influence the mind of the Marchioneſs, that ſhe might not contract any ſuſpicion of the paſſion, which Lord B—— had for me; and might cheriſh a maternal tenderneſs for me, without ever imagining, that I was, one day, to be the wife of her ſon. The firſt ſtep we had already made: and that was of no little conſequence. Should ſhe take it in her head, that I was the dancer of Palermo, of which ſomething had been whiſpered in her ear, ſhe would be ſo far from entertaining me in her houſe, that ſhe would rather endeavour to get me baniſhed out of Italy. It was my buſineſs to keep her in the belief, that I was not the ſame perſon, though ſhe ſhould find out, that Lucretia, the name

name I went by now, was a fictitious one. In effecting this grand purpoſe, I had nothing to fear from the people of the houſe: I was, therefore, only to keep myſelf carefully concealed from the world without door: and I now had an honourable pretext for ſo doing. To paſs for dead, in the eyes of the public, was not ſo gloomy a thought, as the idea of being one day a lady of quality was delightful.

To arrive at that ſummit of my wiſhes, I ſtood in need of all the art a woman is capable of, when ſhe puts a dexterous trick upon another. I knew that every one has a foible; and, that the foible muſt be attacked, when we want to gain a victory over the perſon. It is a weakneſs, common to human nature, to love and eſteem thoſe, who reſemble us; a weakneſs, founded on our vanity; which makes us fancy we

ſee,

ſee, in others, a picture of our own virtues. We may inſinuate ourſelves into the good graces of the moſt auſtere, and unſociable, only by imitating them, even at the expence of copying their defects. It is thus, that impoſtors triumph over the credulity of others: but, likewiſe, in this manner, we may honourably attempt to gain the favour of thoſe who may do us good. I knew ſomething of this art, which is ſo familiar in the world; and, therefore, I determined within myſelf, to imitate the retired life, and ſerioufneſs of the Marchioneſs, in order to gain her affection. It was, in truth, very difficult for me, to pretend an abhorrence of the world, who was ſo much pleaſed with it. But, a hearty reſolution conquers every difficulty: eſpecially when we conſider, that the violence we put upon ourſelves, is only to be of ſhort duration. The Marchioneſs was old enough to be my grand-

grandmother; therefore, I had the pleaſure of hoping I might ſurvive her a long time. This hope encouraged me to accomodate myſelf to her inclination, in ſpite of all my repugnancy. The reader will, hereafter, ſee how I ſucceeded in my attempt: but, I muſt now, for a while, forget myſelf, and caſt an eye towards my lover, who had left me, and gone to enquire for the Baron di Cervia.

By him I had been wounded in the tendereſt of my ſentiments: but heaven is my witneſs, that I never deſired to be revenged of him. If Heaven itſelf interfered to puniſh him for his perfidy to me, and puniſhed him in the moſt ſpeedy, and ſolemn manner, that can be imagined, I had no hand in its chaſtiſement: and, therefore, conſcience gives me no rebukes, upon that account. The reader, perhaps, is not expecting the hor-

rible tragedy that I am going to lay before him: but I as little expected it myſelf: nay, when Lord B—— came, and told it me in perſon, I thought him in a dream.

Towards the evening of that ſame day, having ſeized the moment when the Marchioneſs was engaged, he came into my room ſo confuſed, and agitated, that I began to fear ſome misfortune. What do you think, my deareſt Roſara, is become of our worthleſs Baron di Cervia? This morning I went and enquired for him at an inn, where I was told I might be ſure of finding him: but he was not there at the time. I called for pen, ink and paper, and briefly acquainted him that Lord B—— was in Naples, and was deſirous to ſee him; and would be glad to have ſome difficulties accounted for, by him, in our late epiſtolary correſpondence. After

ter twelve I returned for an anſwer, and aſked if the Baron di Cervia had yet come back to the inn. A ſervant, whom I found there by chance, looked me in the face, with an air of aſtoniſhment, and made me no anſwer. I repeated my queſtion to him: I inſiſted upon his telling me whether or no his maſter was there. He ſtood ſtill a little,—wept,—and, at length, turned from me. I followed him cloſe to the appartment, whither he was going:—threatning him, as he went, if he did not ſatisfy me in my enquiry. He entered an appartment, into which I immediately went after him: but, good God! you will ſhudder, Rolara; for, how did I ſhudder, when I ſaw a man extended, upon the floor, in his own blood; which flowed from two wounds he had made, one in each temple, with a piſtol! His fatal arms lay by him:

and there was he ſtretched out, pale, and ghaſtly, without any ſigns of life.

It was ſome time, before I could recover myſelf enough, from the ſhocking ſight, to aſk the ſervant, that ſhowed me the diſmal ſpectacle, who the unhappy man was, and who murdered him? Sir, anſwered he, did not you aſk for the Baron di Cervia?—Behold him there: he has been his own executioner; and we know not the cauſe of this horrid deed!——This the Baron di Cervia? replied I; and I then ſurveyed him more attentively than at firſt: but, though I have the idea of him very ſtrong upon my memory, I could not find any reſemblance betwixt this perſon, and him, with whom I was ſo intimate, at Rome, ſome years ago.—You impoſe upon me, you villain, ſaid I, to the ſervant, who cried very much; but

but you ſhall anſwer for this cheat. No, ſir, anſwered he, I do not impoſe upon you; but you have been impoſed upon by my maſter, who lies dead there: and I alone was privy to the impoſition; which I now freely, and without reſerve, reveal: for his example has made me ſick of life. This perſon, whom you ſee here a victim to his own hand, paſſed, in Naples, for the Baron di Cervia, whom you knew ſo well, and who was, likewiſe, known to me. But he was only his ſervant, who had uſurped his name; and, by that uſurpation, impoſed upon the credulity of the world. The Baron di Cervia died ſuddenly, as he was going from Rome to Milan. This man, and I, ſerved him at the ſame time; and you may recollect us both: for we have both often ſeen you at our maſter's. My dead fellow-ſervant, intending to turn his maſter's deceaſe to

his own advantage, by taking poſſeſſion of his money, and living jovially with it, perſuaded me to agree, that he ſhould paſs for the Baron di Cervia: he propoſed to go under that name, in places where our maſter never had been; to keep me with him as a ſervant, in appearance; but, in fact, to treat me as a brother: and, by this means, to take every opportunity of getting money, which fortune ſhould throw in his way. The ſcheme appeared to me very practicable; and I entered into it without heſitation. We immediately reſolved to keep our maſter's death a ſecret; and we buried him in a mean village, where he died, under a borrowed name. We were determined to keep up the epiſtolary correſpondence he had held with people in Milan, which was the place of his birth, and other parts, by counterfeiting his hand; at which, my com-

companion was very dexterous. Under ſhelter of this fraud, he correſponded a good while with you, in regard to the Actreſs, whom you recommended to his care: he embezzled the money, which you remitted, from time to time, for her uſe: he never imagined that you would come ſo unexpectedly upon him, as not to give him time to get clear of your juſt reſentment, by flight: and when he was informed, that you had abſolutely been here this morning, and wanted to ſpeak with him, taking it for granted, that you would immediately have detected him; and, finding no other way to elude the decree of juſtice, which would certainly have ſentenced him to the gallows, he ſeized the the moment I happened to be out, and, with a deſperate reſolution, put violent hands upon himſelf, as you ſee. I know that I am as culpable as he, for this ex-

ecrable impoſture: but, if confeſſion merits any recompenſe, proſecute me not, I beſeech you, at the tribunal of Naples; or, at leaſt, give me time to make my eſcape.

After he had ſpoken thus, he threw himſelf on his knees before me: but I turned away from him without giving him an anſwer. Obſerve, my deareſt Roſara, to what a pitch the enthuſiaſm of the world reaches: how many have given, to this violent act of ſuicide, the title of Roman philoſophy, without reflecting, that philoſophy is the daughter of reaſon; and that human reaſon, when it neglects our preſervation, directly oppoſes the inherent dictates of nature. Theſe are not philoſophers; but madmen: and I ſhould name them yet more properly, if I called them impious, and ſacrilegious wretches; who

uſurp,

uſurp, to themſelves, that inviolable right, over their lives, which only belongs to the Omnipotence of Heaven. What could that man think to gain, by deſperately murdering himſelf, to evade my reſentment? But what did that avail him, ſince he could not, at the ſame time, evade the cenſure of the world? His death is already divulged; and different interpretations are put upon it. The major part, convinced that he was an impoſtor, deteſt his infamous memory: and ſome are of opinion, he was ſo deſperately in love with you, that he could not ſurvive your misfortune a ſingle day. How little ſtreſs ought we to lay on the judgments of mankind, who pretend, even to penetrate our very thoughts!——This rumour, however, will do you more good than harm with my mother, if ſhe ſhould

ever come to know it. Let us make the moſt of our advantages. Heaven, you ſee, hath avenged your wrongs; receive its juſtice with an humble complacency. Let us only now think of ſecuring your continuance with me; leſt, through the iniquity of mankind, ſomething worſe befall you.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Character of the Marchioneſs of A——. The Means Roſara purſues to ſecure her Affection.

THIS diſcourſe of the Count cleared up a riddle to me which had coſt me ſo much pain. How could I avoid being deceived by the feigned name of an impoſtor, whoſe letters had even deceived my protector himſelf? 'Tis true, I all along had thoughts, that his ſentiments were unworthy of his birth: but how many are there, in in the world, who, born to be conconſpicuous, and great, bring themſelves down, by their manners, to a level with the loweſt of the rabble? His outward appearance had nothing in it vile, and abject, nothing that denoted the

meaneſs of his birth; where then was the wonder, if it deceived me, ſince a title, and a genteel external ſhew, paſs with the world in general, for intrinſic worth? I often, indeed, thought him under ſome reſtraint, when he was in my company: and that the air of gravity, and dignity which he aſſumed, and which was very unſuitable to his baſe diſpoſition, did not ſit eaſy upon him. He had, however, the firſt and indiſpenſable art of an impoſtor, that of concealing his real character: and candour, though an eſtimable quality, often throws us off our guard, in our dealings with others: and keeps us too long blind to their faults.

After this account, I was ſatisfied of the intentions this profligate had formed againſt my perſon, which had the misfortune to pleaſe him. In time, the letters he had written to my patron,

and

and thoſe he had received from him, came to my hands, and I then penetrated farther into his black treachery. I likewiſe got intelligence, that he himſelf had contrived the ſonnet on the pretended marriage of Lord B——; which I had thought in print, but it really was not: for he had ſuch a dexterity in writing in any way, that he could counterfeit the impreſſion of the types, ſo as to cheat unſuſpecting perſons. What will not wicked men do, to impoſe upon others, when they want to gratify a licentious paſſion? I ſhould have known a good deal more of this affair, if, after this wretch's death, his faithful ſecretary Don Capoſtorno, had not fled from the diligent purſuit of juſtice. The flight of the one, as well as the death of the other, made a good deal of noiſe in Naples: becauſe, as they both followed ſo cloſe upon my misfortune, every body imagined that

they were cloſely connected with it. The world was miſtaken, as it often is; but, however, thoſe two villains were in fact the origin of all my diſquiet, and of my laſt misfortune. It redounded, indeed, providentally, to my advantage; but the world knew nothing of that: for it lamented me as dead; and my ſuppoſed death was moſt of all regretted by my parents. It was not tenderneſs, and natural affection, that moved them; but a ſelfiſh vexation, at ſeeing their capital loſt; which might have enabled them to live in eaſe, and idleneſs. Though I lived ſo retired, that I converſed with nobody, yet I was daily informed of what happened abroad: for, my lover took care to give my ſolitude all the ſatisfaction it would admit. I afterwards knew from him, that my father had again left his wife; without her knowing whither he had gone; and without being

ing previouſly informed of his departure. He had ſold whatever he had found of mine, in my appartment: Mr. Marbell had punctually payed him what he owed me, for my theatrical induſtry: he had robbed my mother of whatever he thought ſhe had not an immediate neceſſity for; and then left her, perhaps, never to ſee her more. Though I did not owe much to a woman, who had brought me into the world, only to embitter my life with her extravagancies, I cannot ſay but the ſtate ſhe was then in, excited my compaſſion. The ſentiments of tenderneſs, towards our parents, are implanted in us, by nature herſelf; and to be inſenſible to their influence, is to ſtrip ourſelves of her. A mother is ſtill a mother, whatſoever ſort of a one, ſhe is; nor will her bad conduct juſtify our neglect in the eyes of Heaven, and the world. Penetrated with theſe reflections, I begged of Lord

B—— to take ſome care of a perſon who was ſo nearly related to me: but at the ſame time, I inſinuated to him, that it was better, ſhe ſhould always be at ſome diſtance from me. I found that my application was unneceſſary: for he had before taken that particular, into conſideration; and he ſoon fixed my mother in a rural retirement, where ſhe would have nothing to do, but to ſtudy her own content, and eaſe. As he had known her at Palermo, he might take notice of her, without the leaſt ſuſpicion. He always kept her in the opinion that I was dead: for which misfortune, ſhe never ſhewed too much maternal grief. She told him that all the people of the houſe immediately concluded, that I had thrown myſelf from the terrals, into the ſea; becauſe, when I was miſſing, they found the door of my room locked faſt, on the inſide. She, likewiſe, informed him, that Don Cirillo

Cirillo was extremely afflicted for my diſaſter: and that motive induced my patron to go viſit him, and comfort him; ſhould he even be obliged to reveal our whole ſecret to him; for, he had before learned, from me, how firmly we might rely upon his honour.

He found him, indeed, in the deplorable ſituation, he had been deſcribed to be in. This gentleman, had entertained no amorous paſſion for me: for, if he had, I have ſhewn before, that it had been in his power to marry me. A true, honourable friendſhip, which hath virtue for its baſis, may, in its tranſports, equal the moſt violent paſſion of love. Such was that of Don Cirillo; and my lover was ſo convinced of it, that he was determined to procure me the pleaſure of his company in my ſolitude; though he well knew, it would be

be a difficult undertaking, on account of the ſingularity of his mother.

However, he did not let him know, that I was alive: but ſoothed him with the ſweet, though melancholy pleaſure of condolance; and beſtowed eulogiums on my memory. Don Cirillo, gave Lord B—— ſo many freſh proofs of my fidelity to him; and of my prudent conduct on the moſt difficult occaſions, that he loved me ever afterwards without the leaſt jealouſy; and put an unbounded confidence in me. In giving me all theſe accounts of him, he communicated to me his intention to introduce him to the friendſhip of the Marchioneſs his mother, that I might have the ſatisfaction of ſometimes converſing with him; as he was the only perſon to whom we could truſt our ſecret. It was a difficult ſtep: for the Marchioneſs lived continually by herſelf.

She

She never went out of the houſe, but when ſhe was obliged to go, and ſee her relations: her own domeſticks ſeldom ſaw her; and never durſt ſpeak to her, till ſhe had ſpoken to them. Her very preſence threw an air of gravity, auſterity, and gloom around her. Whenever ſhe opened her mouth, ſhe ſpoke like an oracle, in a few, ſententious words. She commonly ſhewed her diſpleaſure, by turning her back upon you; which, even with her ſon, was more expreſſive, than the ſevereſt threat. Her houſe, was regulated like a college, by the ſound of a bell; as if it had been condemned to a perpetual ſilence. Woe to the maid, that was ſeen in her houſe, with a dreſs that treſpaſſed in the leaſt upon ſimplicity. She was for having others join an extreme politeneſs with an extreme reſerve, as ſhe attempted to combine them in herſelf. She waged a conſtant war with idleneſs; and the

woman

woman could not live in her family, who had not always either her prayer book, or her work in her hand. She puſhed her notions, of female honour, to a ridiculous ſuperſtition: for, ſhe would not keep birds in her houſe, nor dogs, nor cats that were of the maſculine gender; as if ſhe had been afraid, that an animal of a different ſex, would have defiled the chaſte eyes of herſelf, or her ſervants. She never looked her ſon even directly in the face while ſhe was talking to him; but converſed with him ſide-ways, to avoid the ill manners of ſpeaking to him, with her back towards him. The maid who could beſt ape her prudery, was ſure of being her favourite. Such was her averſion to love, that ſhe could not think of ſuffering her only ſon to marry, nor to be heir of her immenſe fortune, but by ſhuddering at the name of marriage, and at the thought of celebrating it under

under that roof, which had been witneſs to her continent widowhood.

Her delicacy was undoubtedly ridiculous; but it was compenſated by ſo many good qualities, that it was in her a pardonable weakneſs. She had not always been of this rigorous caſt: nay, I have been told, by thoſe who knew her in her youth, that ſhe was then extremely amiable, and not without her ſhare of ſuſceptibility. In us, women time makes prodigious changes. Many wiſely deſert the world, when they ſee it deſerts them; and, like prudent generals, beat a retreat, when they can no longer diſpute the honour of the day. Others there are, who, under the aſhes of old-age, keep alive the ſparks of their amorous deſires; and, knowing that they are frail themſelves, conclude others to be ſo too: and will not pardon the moſt innocent appearances.

I know not in which claſs to rank the Marchioneſs, becauſe I never knew her enough to pronounce upon her, on account of the great conſtraint I was under in her company, and by reaſon of the extreme circumſpection of her behaviour. Submitting, however, to the neceſſity of my circumſtances, I learned ſo well to imitate her inclinations, and her humour, that I firſt had the honour to merit her approbation, and afterwards her affection.

To paſs thus at once, from the freedom of the theatre, to the rigour of a life, which partook ſo much of the cloiſter, was a very abrupt, and difficult change. No more gaiety of dreſs, no more paint, no more powder, nor other ornaments, which are ſometimes, all the charms a woman has to boaſt of. Whenever I now went to the glaſs, it was to collect my looks, and my perſon, into

a

a pious demureneſs, that I might pleaſe my protectreſs, and exhibit to her, an image of herſelf. By this art, I ſo gained upon her affection, that ſhe uſed to call me her daughter, concluding with juſtice, that I already owed her more, than I owed my mother: and ſhe would ſometimes declare to me, that if I perſevered in my virtuous ſentiments, I ſhould ſtand in need of no one's aſſiſtance. Having got thus far, I thought myſelf happy in my ſituation: nor did I find it inſupportable to live pent up in four walls: for I was ſatisfied, that I could not then be ſo well diſpoſed of. Our happineſs depends chiefly upon opinion: and weak are they, who, imagining to themſelves, a ſtate of felicity, unattainable, becauſe depending upon externals, hunt eagerly after the gilded phantom, and get only torment for their trouble.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Defence of Don Cirillo; an innocent Jeſt put upon him, to remove his Grief for Roſara's ſuppoſed Death.

LORD B——, full of the thought of introducing Don Cirillo to his mother, that he might, likewiſe, have the pleaſure of ſurpriſing him at a proper time, with a ſight of me, who, he thought, was no longer amongſt the living, began to talk of him one day at dinner, with a view to his deſign. He ſaid, he had lately come to a thorough knowledge of his merit, which was far ſuperior to that of any one of his profeſſion, whom he ever knew. A gentleman of letters, without oſtentation; and one who never purchaſed the applauſe

plauſe of the public, by unworthy arts. A warm, and diſintered friend; an abhorrer of adulation; one, who ſcorned to purchaſe the ſmiles, and bounty of the great, by ſordid flattery, and a ſacrifice of his liberty. A philoſopher, without any preſumptuous impiety, who wiſely joins complaiſance, and gaiety, to the practice of the ſtricteſt, and moſt chriſtian morality. In ſhort, a man whoſe company he would often wiſh to have in his moſt private hours, as he ſhould always be ſure of reaping ſome uſeful knowledge from his converſation, The Marchioneſs, who was generally wont to hear her ſon, without anſwering him, perhaps, to ſhow her averſion to the profane ſubjects he talked of, ſignified to him on this occaſion, that the favourable picture he drew of Don Cirillo, had made ſome impreſſion upon her. She aſked him, who he was, and how

thoſe

thoſe rare talents of his were employed.

The Count replied, that he had a genteel private fortune of his own; that he was a man of letters by profeſſion, in which he had diſtinguiſhed himſelf, by many books he had publiſhed on various ſubjects, and in particular, by ſome comedies, and tragedies, which had met with uncommon applauſe. He had now touched a ſtring, that was to yield a very grating ſound to his mother's pious ears. In ſhort, at theſe laſt words, ſhe half-ſhut her eyes; ſhe turned up her noſe a little, and anſwered, fye, fye; as if the ſtrongeſt and moſt rational diſapprobation, had been couched under this laconic deciſion, the grounds of which were left us to divine.

The Count ſaw, that he had gone a dangerous length; but he maintained his

his ground.——Give me leave, ſaid he, madam: I ſhould agree with you, that writing for the ſtage was a ſcandalous employment, a proſtitution of talents, for the ſport of a rabble, if I was as little acquainted with the theatre as you are; who have not ſet your foot in one, for ſo many years. The ſtage is not now what it formerly was: it is no longer the ſchool of ſtupidity, buffoonery, and licentiouſneſs. For ſome years, we have ſeen it employed in its original deſign: that is, to correct vice by repreſenting it in it's moſt ſhocking deformity; to inſinuate virtue, by painting it in the moſt lively, and attractive colours of nature and art; and to civilize mankind, by teaching them the ſevere maxims of ſound philoſophy, tempered with the ſweets of ſentiment, and poetry. I know not whether this generous plan has met with more ſucceſs from the genius of him, who firſt undertook it,

or from the good diſpoſition of the public; who, ſeeing it unexpectedly attempted, have given all poſſible encouragement to it's further perfection, by their praiſes, and rewards. I know very well, madam, and ſo do you, that, though a ſword is part of a gentleman's equipment, it may be made a wrong uſe of in the hand of a bully, or an aſſaſſin; and that the beſt laws may be abuſed by an iniquitous judge, or by a mercenary, and profligate lawyer. Shall we ſay, for this reaſon, that I do wrong to wear a ſword; or that it is wrong in every advocate to plead at the bar? It is no more blameable to write for the theatre, than it is to write on any grave, and worthy ſubject, in a different manner. Dramatic poetry is only a branch of that immenſe tree of knowledge, which the hand of Heaven planted upon earth. Why need we ſcruple to drink of a river, whoſe waters are not prohibited,

prohibited, and contain in them nothing poiſonous, and fatal? There is nothing ill, in merely writing for the ſtage: 'tis the manner of writing only, that can be criminal; when it departs from the rules of decorum, and from the great aim of reforming the world, which it ought always to have in view. If this is the ſtrain of Don Cirillo's writings, as they themſelves convince the world it is, why will you diſapprove his way of employing himſelf; though you are not acquainted with his works? Will you blame him for giving his time to ſtudy, rather than ſpending it, I ſhould ſay, throwing it away, on idleneſs, and amours? Will you ſay he does ill for chuſing rather to make an honourable profit of his literary productions, than to augment his fortune by gaming, by being the mean dependant of ſome worthleſs nobleman, and ſuch deteſtable, though too much

practiſed arts? Will you ſay, that he does ill in endeavouring to inſtruct the public with his learning, rather than in ſhocking it, with his bad example? Ah! my deareſt madam, I wiſh there were many people, who acted like him! we ſhould then ſee our country more enlightened, and leſs addicted to vice: and ſtupid, malignant cenſurers, would not preſume to blaſt the honours which they cannot obtain.

The Count was going on; but the Marchioneſs interrupted him, by owning that his arguments were juſt; and that he was altogether in the right. He went, however, ſo far as to let her know that he expected Don Cirillo next morning, to drink chocolate with him in his apartment; and that he would then take the liberty of preſenting him to her ladyſhip. The Marchioneſs, though ſhe did not directly give her aſ-

ſent,

ſent, ſaid, however, nothing to the contrary: and, for that time, there was no further talk upon the ſubject.

The next day he was as good as his word; and the Marchioneſs was obliged out of good manners, to receive Don Cirillo, what prudery ſoever ſhe might put on upon the occaſion. What an abyſs is the human heart! the bottom of which, is never to be fathomed: the more we ſtudy it, the leſs we can pronounce upon it: becauſe moral extravagancies diſcover themſelves every day; which oblige us to change our ſpeculative ſyſtem. It muſt be owned, that either Don Cirillo's perſon pleaſed the Marchioneſs; or that he won her heart, by obſerving the cue that had been given him, by declaiming in this firſt viſit, as opportunity offered, againſt the licentiouſneſs of the age: and by giving himſelf out for an implacable

enemy to the whole female ſex. For, ſhe ſeemed pleaſed with his company, liſtened attentively to his converſation; deſired him to make her houſe his own: and, conſequently, put it in his power to viſit her, whenever he thought proper. By whatever ſecret diſpoſition this complaiſance was dictated, ſhe had enough of her uſual artfulneſs to pretend that it merely proceeded from a deſire to gratify her ſon. We could not be ſo rude as not to take her word for it, when ſhe was ſo warmly ſeconding our aim. We ſhall ſee, as we advance, that the moſt recluſe dames are not altogether free from the weakneſſes of the world.—But I muſt not now dwell any longer on this ſubject, as I have ſomething better wherewith to entertain the reader.

Don Cirillo, having taken his leave of the Marchioneſs, Lord B——, deſired

fired him to take a turn with him, that he might ſhew him ſome pictures, which he ſet a very high value upon. My part in the plot had been previouſly given me; and I ſtood behind a door curtain in the apartment, where they were examining theſe pictures. The Count ſtopped with Don Cirillo, by the ſpot where I was; and told he had yet a true, and lively portrait of me to ſhow him, which would yield him a tender and heart-felt mixture of melancholy, and pleaſure: where is it, ſaid Don Cirillo with a ſmile, and a tear, which ſhewed how ſweet, and painful at once my memory was to him. Here it is, anſwered the Count: and, at the ſame time, drawing aſide the curtain, behind which I was concealed, exhibited me to him ſo unawares, that he ſtood fixed like a ſtatue, with aſtoniſhment, and joy. At firſt, he did not believe his eyes, and exclaimed that he

was in a dream; but, after I had myſelf informed him of the whole fact, he could not make an end of returning thanks to the Count for the genteel ſurprize he had put upon him; and, for the opportunity he gave him of enjoying our former friendſhip; declaring, that he would keep our ſecret moſt inviolably, and do every thing that lay in his power to facilitate the completion of our wiſhes.

Here we ended our meeting; for we were obliged to obſerve rigorous meaſures, that the people of the houſe might form no ſuſpicions. When they were gone, I waited upon the Marchioneſs, to ſee if ſhe had any commands for me; becauſe the more ſhe treated me like a daughter, the more I endeavoured to diſtinguiſh myſelf amongſt her attendants by my aſſiduity and zeal, to execute her orders. She made me

immediately

immediately come forward, was more communicative than uſual, gave me an account of the viſit ſhe had had from Don Cirillo, whoſe diſcretion, and moral converſation had given her a favourable oponion of him. I obſerved, from that time, that ſhe ſpoke of him with pleaſure; and that it was nothing, but her ſevere affectation, that reſtrained her from ſpeaking of him more than ſhe did. I took care to ſecond her weakneſs, by frequently reſuming the favourite topic, by tickling her ears with the new fame, he was often acquiring: and thus I ſtrengthened her inclination, and thawed the root of her ſanctity.

I thought, if I could raiſe a paſſion in the Marchioneſs for Don Cirillo, ſhe would be the more ready to excuſe her ſon's love for me: it is enough that we are women to be capable of love: and this paſſion is not to be excluded by

auſterity, retirement, or age; becauſe it can always introduce itſelf into a garb moſt agreeable to the perſon whom it wants to ſubdue. We all have a tender feeling for thoſe defects in others, which we are conſcious of, in ourſelves: and we, ſometimes, even ſtile them virtues, to guard ourſelves againſt any imputation of vice. The better the Marchioneſs, and Don Cirillo were acquainted, the leſs notice ſhe would take of her ſon's conduct, and mine. The whole houſe would take a more lively air; which at preſent, ſeemed a ſilent deſert: I myſelf, ſhould breathe freſh life, who, in the gloom of ſolitude, ſo oppoſite to the manner in which I had been brought up, found ſome hours ſo liſtleſs, and heavy, that I knew not how to beſtow myſelf. There could not be a better ſcheme, if the event would but anſwer my expectation. And I thought it could not fail:

fail: for I was ſo much experienced in human weakneſs, that I was ſure I could diſtinguiſh a woman's inclination, from its firſt ſpringing up in her heart. In fact, Iwas not deceived on this occaſion; though, when I revealed my ſuſpicion to the Count, and Don Cirillo himſelf, they were fit to die of laughing; and they thought my opinion ſo extravagant, that not the leaſt hope was to be founded upon it. Oh! how much more knowing are women, often, than philoſophers! For experience guides us more ſurely through life, than the moſt refined ſpeculation.

CHAP. XV.

Roſara returns to Palermo.——The recluſe Life ſhe leads there.——A Match propoſed to Roſara.

THE Marchioneſs, having diſcharged her duty to her niece, on her marriage, as expeditiouſly as poſſible, began to talk of returning to Palermo, whither her domeſtic affairs, and her love of ſolitude, called her, in all haſte. Though ſhe had a houſe in Naples, magnificently furniſhed, ſhe could not endure to be near the noiſe of a court; and longed for the quiet of her country-ſeat; which was at a little diſtance from Palermo. This reſolution made us all very anxious for the conſequences.—Though ſhe had very little connexion with

with ſociety, yet ſhe might be under a neceſſity of admitting ſome perſon or other into her houſe, who, probably, might know me. Had I none elſe to fear, it would be impoſſible to conceal myſelf from Lady A——, her daughter: and it would, likewiſe, be a tickliſh matter to truſt her with my ſecret; ſince ſhe had a general acquaintance in the city, ſome of whom might give her a bad impreſſion of me, or get my ſtory out of her. It was, likewiſe, to be obſerved, that ſhe did not agree very well with her mother, on account of her ſocial gay life: and it might be of dangerous conſequence to me, if I diſobliged either the one, or the other. I was ſo well known in Palermo, that I could not think of denying myſelf to be the perſon who had formerly been there. The news of my untimely death had ſoon got thither: and, from the bare ſuſpicion that I was alive, they might, perhaps,

perhaps, unravel our whole myſtery. As I was univerſally regretted, they would naturally endeavour to be fully informed of a fact, in which they were ſo deeply intereſted, by curioſity, and regard.

It was impoſſible for me to prevent the volubility of their tongues, on my adventure: for, to beg them to be ſilent, would only prompt them to ſpeak of it.

We now found ourſelves extremely embarraſſed, and we almoſt repented of our innocent fiction, though it had afforded us ſo much pleaſure. When I talked over the imminent danger we were in, with Lord B——, we could think of no recourſe. It ſeemed very difficult for us to get his mother's departure put off; but ſuppoſe we ſhould ſucceed in that endeavour, what end would

would it anſwer; ſince ſhe would certainly return to Palermo ſome time or other. The Count thought of perſuading his mother to ſhut me up in a retreat, at ſome diſtance from Naples, where I could not poſſibly be known: thus to be buried alive, till his circumſtances would permit him to call me forth into public life. Even this project had its difficulty, as he could not endure the idea of having me at a diſtance from him; leſt ſome ſuch other misfortune ſhould happen, as had befallen the Baron di Cervia. When we communicated our fears to Don Cirillo, he told us, that he hoped it would be in his power to remove them. He ſaid, he would endeavour to perſuade the Marchioneſs to defer her intended departure, for that winter; or, to take a journey to Rome; by which means, we might contrive, at our leiſure, ſome other expedient, to prevent her coming

to

to the knowledge of our connexion. We commonly flatter ourſelves, that we can remove the greateſt difficulties, when they are at a diſtance. Hope is our moſt faithful friend in adverſity; and, at the ſame time, our crueleſt enemy. She amuſes us, from day to day, with a thouſand fair images. But, while our fancy is engroſſed by them, we loſe the precious time, in which we ſhould repair, or obviate, any inconvenience. From weakneſs it was, that we approved of Don Cirillo's project: and we unanimouſly agreed, that he ſhould immediately ſet about the execution of it. It would be tedious to tell the reader minutely the arguments made uſe of, by Don Cirillo, to win the Marchioneſs to our purpoſe, when I am haſtening to matters of greater importance. To rid us of the imminent danger we were in, he paid his court to the Marchioneſs; and expreſſed his deepeſt

deepeſt concern for her intending ſo ſoon to leave Naples. Here her ladyſhip's rigid virtue drew aſide the mask a little: but, at the ſame time, ſhe fruſtrated his unknown deſign. To ſhow her gratitude, for the pleaſure which Con Cirillo expreſſed, in having her company, ſhe told him he ſhould be very welcome to attend her to Palermo: nay, ſhe even deſired him to accompany her: and offered him a philoſophical retreat in her houſe; where he might calmly purſue his ſtudies, without the leaſt interruption. He had no decent reply, to decline ſo generous an offer. He was obliged to bow his head, in ſilent acknowledgment of the honour, and wait for our ſentiments: as he was acting ſolely for our intereſt, and by our conſent.

This invitation convinced us, that the Marchioneſs had a ſecret inclination for

for our friend; whom, indeed, we thought very worthy of her favour. Our fears were counter-ballanced, by conſidering the pleaſure we ſhould have in his company, and the benefit we ſhould receive from his counſel, and aſſiſtance. Suppoſing our ſcheme took air; yet, if he ſhould have any influence over the mind of the Marchioneſs, we were ſure of having, in him, an eloquent advocate; and one, who would warmly promote our happineſs. It was, therefore, determined, that Don Cirillo ſhould go with us to Palermo: and, in doing what was ſo much deſired by us, it appeared, that he did it out of pure complaiſance, to a lady, who honoured him ſo far above his merit; and well deſerved from him, a manifeſt teſtimony of his gratitude, in an act, which did not ſeem to contribute either to his pleaſure or his intereſt.

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Accordingly, we ſet out for Sicily, where we arrived in a few days: nor could any of my acquaintance take notice of me; as we entered Palermo in the night. I, likewiſe, ſat ſo ſnug as we went along, and with my face covered, that I could hardly be diſtinguiſhed, even by thoſe, who ſhould ſurvey me with the greateſt attention. This precaution of mine was attributed, by her ladyſhip, to pure modeſty; and it endeared me the more to her: whereas, it proceeded from a fear of being diſcovered, which made me tremble, when I ſaw any one looking at me. As ſoon as we got to the marchioneſs's, I ran and hid myſelf in the remoteſt corner of her houſe: nor could all their entreaties prevail with me to quit my place of refuge. The firſt days, after our arrival, we ſpent in a continual tide of viſits: the Marchioneſs received them in her uſual ſhort way: but they gave

gave me not the leaſt uneaſineſs: becauſe it was not ſo much as known that I was in the world. As ſhe had been given to underſtand, that it was proper to conceal me, from motives of humanity, and prudence, ſhe never mentioned me, though ſhe heard ſome confuſed accounts of me. As ſhe placed a full confidence in what I had told her of myſelf, ſhe doubted not but others were out in their conjectures. She was ſatisfied that they confounded facts, and perſons, as human teſtimony is very apt to err; and that ſhe was more at the bottom of my hiſtory than any of them.

When theſe firſt ceremonies were over, I lived in the moſt perfect tranquility: for no body came to diſturb me in my ſolitude. The Count began to like retirement more than uſual; which, in one reſpect, pleaſed his mother:

ther : but, in another view, it alarmed her. It happened, to my misforrune, that ſhe ſometimes found us taking a turn together in the garden : and tho' ſhe took no notice of it, yet I obſerved, that ſhe watched every opportunity of ſurprizing us in our walks; probably, that ſhe might verify her ſuſpicions, without making any noiſe.

We were determined to remedy that evil, by a ſtratagem, which would perplex her curioſity ſtill more; and divert her from a diſcovery of the truth. I ſometimes took a walk with Don Cirillo, and let her, deſignedly, find us, in the ſame place, to give her to underſtand, that the company of the one and the other, was, to me, totally caſual, and indifferent. This ſecond diſcovery, I thought, diſconcerted her more than the firſt; though ſhe endeavoured, as much as ſhe could, to conceal her ſurprize.

prize. She conceived, however, ſuch a jealouſy of Don Cirillo, and me, that, in ſpite of all her moderation, ſhe ſoon made us ſenſible of its effects.

Addreſſing me, one day, when we were alone, at a leiſure hour, ſhe made me an artful ſpeech, the drift of which I did not at firſt ſee: but when it was ended, I could ſcarce refrain from laughing.——My dear girl, ſaid ſhe to me, you have ſo thoroughly gained my affection, that nothing in life is dearer to me than your company, and your exemplary conduct. Alas! what grief will it be to me to leave you, when Heaven ſhall think fit to call me out of this world: for, ſooner or later, we all muſt die: and, great conſolation would it be to me, in that laſt trying ſcene, to ſee you fixed, in ſuch a manner, that your virtue would have nothing more to fear. If you have an inclination

clination for a perpetual retirement, I beg you would freely let me know it; and I will take care to have you fixed, at my own expence, in that ſecure ſtate. If you are diſpoſed to enter into the ſtate of matrimony, you ſhall have any ſupply from me, that may be neceſſary to ſettle you in that way, to your ſatisfaction. It would pierce me to the heart, that you ſhould be ſeparated from me before my death: but, Heaven forbid, that I ſhould oppoſe its will, and your happineſs! You have only to chuſe for yourſelf, at your leiſure: for I want not to haſten you, nor to put any conſtraint upon you. If a convent is your taſte, I ſhall take you to ſee more than one, that you may enter into that which you like beſt. If you would rather chuſe a married ſtate, I would adviſe you, as a mother, to take Don Cirillo for your husband: a better, I am ſure, I could not propoſe to you.

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From what I know of him, I think, I dare venture to engage, that he would not be averſe to ſuch a contract. As I look upon you both, to be, in ſome meaſure, dependant on me, I think, when you, and he, once know, that I want to unite you, for your mutual good, that ſhould be enough to bring about the match. I am not for obliging you to act, from any ſubjection, which you may ſuppoſe you lie under to me: I only mean to give you my affectionate advice, which, however, I think, deſerves your attention. Think of what I have now ſaid to you, my daughter: and, when I am once acquainted with the reſult of your conſideration, I ſhall bring matters to bear, in your favour, in ſuch a manner, as to convince you of my ſincerity, and tenderneſs.

I ſhould, certainly, have fallen into a hearty fit of laughing, at theſe propoſals, had not I been kept from it, by my reſpect for the perſon who made them. I was too well verſed in love, not to ſee, that the Marchioneſs, by theſe offers, was only ſounding my heart, and my affections. She had taken it into her head, that ſome ſecret correſpondence paſſed betwixt Don Cirillo and me; and ſhe only played off theſe appearances of zeal for me, to calm her amorous jealouſy. It did not become a lady, of her virtuous character, to expreſs any indignation, upon dubious grounds. If they love each other, ſhe undoubtedly thought with with herſelf, the girl will be glad to marry him; and never dream that I am her rival: and, if ſhe accepts the match, I ſhall then be convinced of her hypocriſy. In this reaſoning of hers, the Marchioneſs concluded juſtly enough:

but ſhe inveſtigated my mind with very ſhallow principles. Self-love is blind; and, therefore, it is no wonder if it miſleads the moſt cautious people into unguarded ſteps. For, the moſt cautious people ſometimes preſume, from their great circumſpection, that they cannot be deceived.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

The Jealouſy of Lord B——, and of the Marchioneſs his Mother, put Roſara in Danger of being diſcovered.

WHEN I was to give ſome anſwer to the Marchioneſs, I immediately fell into doubt, whether, or no, I ſhould take a little time, and conſult with the Count, and Don Cirillo, before I reſolved her, or quit her ſuſpicions, at once, by a clear, and determinate refuſal of her matrimonial offer. By deferring my anſwer, I was ſure to avoid error; by immediately refuſing to marry Don Cirillo, I ſhould bring myſelf under ſome neceſſity of chuſing the veil: and, what ſhould I do, in that caſe, if ſhe

ſhould take me at my word? I thought I would ſteer between the two extremes: and, therefore, I told her, that, in every thing, I ſhould ſubmit to her will, with the humbleſt reſignation. This did not quiet her: and I was obliged to make another ſtep of the ſame kind; that is, one which decided nothing. I, therefore, added, that I had not the leaſt inclination to marry: but, notwithſtanding, I would think of it ſeriouſly, as ſhe had ordered me. She ſeemed to be ſatisfied with this anſwer: and, I thought, it was a very proper one: but, it was to produce a very bad effect.

The Marchioneſs, a little after, put Don Cirillo to the trial: and to learn, likewiſe, how his heart ſtood. After he had aſſured her of his readineſs to ſerve her, ſhe aſked him, with an air of ſuperiority, if he was willing to marry me, to oblige her? Don Cirillo was thunder-

ſtruck,

ſtruck, with this unexpected propoſal. He, too, fancied, that ſhe had ſome deſign, in putting the queſtion: but, in order to evade it, without offending the Marchioneſs, he anſwered, that it was an affair, in which another perſon, as well as himſelf, was concerned; and, that my conſent ſhould firſt be aſked. She conſents, with all her heart, anſwered ſhe. (I know not what regard ſhe then had for veracity; unleſs her jealouſy convinced her that ſhe was ſpeaking the truth.) Don Cirillo replied, that he was not worthy of the honour: but that, in a matter of ſo great conſequence, he begged leave to think a little more maturely.

Thus they two ended their diſcourſe: but Don Cirillo, having, immediately afterwards, communicated to Lord B—, the conference he had, with his mother, the latter was prodigiouſly alarmed;

and raſhly ſuſpected, that he was learning a truth, which would be a mortal enemy to his peace. He imagined, that I preferred the friend, with whoſe company he had indulged me, to himſelf: for, he did not think I was coquette enough to encourage them both at once, as rivals. No ſuſpicion could be worſe grounded than this: but what influence can truth have upon us, when we only ſee objects through the medium, which is raiſed by our paſſions? He did not ſhow the leaſt reſentment againſt me, to Don Cirillo, that he might not leſſen himſelf to that gentleman, nor make his ſituation known to his mother. But, I well perceived, that ſome poiſon was lurking in his heart; though I could not find out the cauſe of it. As it was not in our power to converſe when we choſe, we were obliged to ſteal hours of meeting, that our interviews might be unobſerved by the Marchioneſs. Formerly,

merly, he had always been upon the watch, for thoſe golden moments, to ſweeten my ſolitary life, with his tenderneſs: but, he waved them, from the day, on which Don Cirillo had informed him of the Marchioneſs's propoſal; inſomuch, that four days paſt; and, all that time, I had not an opportunity of ſpeaking a word to him, in private. Whenever I ſaw him with others, I read the ſevereſt reproaches in his countenance; which, I well knew, I had not deſerved. This reſerve of his, gave me unſpeakable anguiſh: and, it was ſo much the more painful, as I could contrive no method to find out the cauſe of his diſguſt. For ſome days, I ſuffered, in ſilence, a prey to diſcontent: but, being no longer able to contain myſelf, I was determined to be the firſt to demand of my lover, by a line or two, the reaſon of his change. I had the opportunity of writing, without being

diſturbed; I ſeized a lucky moment, and ſlipped my card into his hand, even juſt when he was going to avoid me. But, I had much to ſuffer, before I was to receive the anſwer, which calmed my uneaſineſs. The Count made me languiſh for it, two days: at length, he gave it me, while we were at table, in reaching me a handkerchief, which had fallen to the ground: and, great was my impatience, after I had received it, to ſee its contents.

As ſoon as dinner was over, I retired to my chamber, opened my letter, and read as follows:

'Of what conſequence can I be to 'your happineſs, ſince you are diſpoſed 'to marry Don Cirillo; as my mother 'herſelf aſſures me, to whom, it ſeems, 'you now intruſt your ſchemes? Let 'me endeavour to regain my peace. I

'ſhall

'ſhall not diſturb yours: for, I love you 'as much in your ingratitude, as you 'deſpiſe me for my fidelity.

'Adieu.'

It will eaſily be believed, that I was ſtruck motionleſs, at a reproach, which my tenderneſs had ſo little deſerved: for, I did not know in what manner the Marchioneſs had propoſed the matter to Don Cirillo; nor what anſwer he had given her. I was afraid, that the Marchioneſs had raiſed, in her ſon, this diffidence of me, that ſhe might be convinced whether, or no, there was any ſecret correſpondence betwixt us: and, that his blind jealouſy had made him fall headlong into the ſnare. I was, likewiſe, afraid (for love is full of fears) that he was taking hold of ſome weak pretext, to break his faith with me. In ſhort, the peruſal of this letter ſhocked me ſo ſeverely, that I ſtood, for ſome

time, on the ſpot, where I had read it, motionleſs, and petrified, with amazement.

A grievous misfortune ſeldom comes upon us, unattended with repeated ſtrokes of adverſity: for, it robs us of that ſteadineſs, and circumſpection of conduct, which is neceſſary to avoid other calamities. In this attitude of a ſtatue, the Marchioneſs came upon me, as ſhe was going to take her uſual walk in the garden; ſo that I ſcarce had time to thruſt the Count's note into my pocket, and reduce my countenance to to ſuch an air of compoſure, that I might not ſhow her any mark of my confuſion. I attended her to her walk, according to cuſtom: but, there ſhe plied me with ſuch a torrent of holy jargon, that ſhe quite ſtupified me: and, as I was unthinkingly taking my handkerchief out of my pocket, the Count's

Count's letter, which I had lately whipped into it, came out at the ſame time, and fell upon the ground.

My face inſtantaneouſly ſtruck fire, and I ſhuddered through my whole frame: but, I immediately ſnatched it up, and put it again in my pocket, without her ladyſhip's perceiving my confuſion. She had ſeen the paper, however, and aſked me indifferently what it was? and I, with equal coolneſs, replied, that it was an ode, which Don Cirillo had written, upon the immortality of the ſoul; and taking out that very compoſition, which was luckily in the ſame pocket with the letter, I preſented it to the Marchioneſs, to aſſure her, by occular demonſtration, that I had told her the truth. Satisfied with my readineſs in producing it, ſhe waved looking at it; and thus my good fortune befriended me, in an accident,

which might have been attended with a very heavy diſaſter.

My uneaſineſs, however, did not end here: for I had yet a good deal of difficuity, to overcome, in pacifying the Count, whom I had not an opportunity of ſpeaking to; and to whom I would not run the hazard of writing. Whilſt my heart was oppreſſed with this perplexity, another ſtarted up, which called for my matureſt deliberation; and even diverted my lover from brooding over his jealouſy: ſo alarming it was, and ſeemed to threaten ſuch fatal conſequences! Lady A——, his mother's ſiſter, ſent word to the Marchioneſs, that ſhe intended, next day, to come and dine with her, in the country, where ſhe had ſomething to communicate to her, of the utmoſt importance. Alas! I am ruined! It is not probable that the Marchioneſs will ſuffer me to keep myſelf

myſelf concealed from her daughter: and, if ſhe ſhould ſee me, without being forewarned that I am here, we ſhall have one of the moſt whimſical and ridiculous ſcenes played, in this houſe, that ever were exhibited on the Italian theatres. Indeed, whoever reads theſe Memoirs, will own me to be thoroughly an actreſs, without paying regard to the title: for, my ſtory has ſo much intrigue in it, that we ſhould not deſire more, even in a dramatical performance. If Lady A——, thought I, ſhould really ſee me, how ludicrouſly would my capricious adventures be unravelled! In what a metamorphoſis ſhould I appear! How the Marchioneſs would be deceived! How her ſon would be confounded!—All this is unavoidable; unleſs we apply ſome remedy: but, what remedy can we apply? ſince it is equally dangerous to inform the Counteſs, previouſly,

previouſly, of my ſituation; and, to avoid ſeeing her.

Lord B———, notwithſtanding his amorous indignation, was attentive to our danger: and, he was the firſt to ſeek an opportunity of talking with me, andof concerting meaſures formy ſafety. When he preſented himſelf before me, and began to addreſs me on this knotty affair, I own the truth, I found myſelf a real woman: and vanity then influenced me more than love. You need not, ſir, ſaid I to him, in a determined and haughty tone, you need not give yourſelf ſo much trouble, to prevent your mother's juſt reſentment, if ſhe ſhould find herſelf deceived: for, I am ready to confeſs, to her, my treachery, before to-morrow morning; and, to beg of her, out of compaſſion; or, for my due puniſhment, to ſhut me up, in a retreat for life. What ſignify, ſir, your preſent cares?

cares? ſince you are always ready to torment me on ſuch trifling grounds. If you are tired of my company,—if you repent of your promiſes,—if you are for ſacrificing me, the ſecond time, to your inconſtancy, let that be as you pleaſe: but don't ſearch for pretexts, to make yourſelf appear innocent, and me culpable, of things, which I never once dreamed of. Within two hours, my lot ſhall be decided; and you ſhall get rid of me, without any further contrivance. Keep, therefore, at a diſtance from me, as you have done for many days; and ſuffer me to prepare myſelf for a magnanimous act; which will be as much to my credit, as it will reflect diſhonour upon you.

After I had ſpoken thus, I turned about from him, and was going away. But, he took hold of my arm, and ſtopped me; and made uſe of the ſofteſt in-

intreaties, to mitigate my anger. I bluſh not to ſay, that I ſhould immediately have yielded, if I had merely followed the impulſe of my tenderneſs: but, I was a woman: and, as I was to be ſubdued, it was my buſineſs to ſell the honour of the victory as dear as I could. Poor creatures ſhould we be, if, while we are conſcious of our weakneſs, we had not art enough, to diſſemble it, upon occaſion, in order to enhance our value. We are under a neceſſity of keeping ourſelves in credit, by our refuſals: for, if we were to diſcover our natural facility, we ſhould lower ourſelves too much in the eyes of thoſe, whoſe adoration of us, is kept alive, and heightened, by our difficulty to be won. A place, that muſt ſurrender, ought, at leaſt, for the ſake of honour, to diſpute every inch of ground. As I was ſtrongly impreſſed by theſe rules, I did not ſhow myſelf ſo eaſily per-

perſuaded, by the arguments of the Count; though, from the beginning of our interview, I was detetmined to ſurrender. Without this apparent obſtinacy, I ſhould not have had the pleaſure of ſeeing him fall down, at my feet, and intreat me, with tears, to forgive his error; which he was ready to expiate, with his blood. This was no ſmall triumph, to a woman, injured by her lover: but, it was a triumph, which coſt me ſo much pain, that I would rather have put up with the moſt ignominious defeat.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Roſara in Danger of being diſcovered by the very Way, ſhe takes to conceal herſelf.

THIS ſcene paſſed, betwixt the Count, and me, in a low gallery, which led to his appartment, and other parts of the houſe; and, likewiſe, opened into the garden. The twilight was come on, that ſoft, and pleaſant hour, which partakes, at once, of night, and day. I had put on an air of indignation. I artfully, however, mixed love with my anger; as I wanted to be intreated, without ſhowing that diſpoſition. He ſtood by me, eager, and agitated, holding me by my hand, and arm, that I might not go away; when, God knows from whence, or how! behold,

hold, the Marchioneſs appeared! who, ſurprized, to find us together, in that place, at that time, and in that attitude, meaſured us from head to foot, with a ſevere look, but went a little on, without further notice; becauſe, perhaps, ſhe was at a loſs what to ſay.

I trembled, as if death had been brandiſhing his dart at my elbow: I looked down to the ground, as if I had not ſeen her; and ſummoning, the little preſence of mind, which remained with me, unextinguiſhed by fear, I made uſe of the firſt ſtratagem that came into my head, to give my ſituation as indifferent an air, as it would admit. No, ſir, ſaid I, without well knowing what I ſaid; no, ſir, I am determined not to marry: indeed, ſhould the Marchioneſs your mother, command me to take a huſband, I would do ſome violence to myſelf, rather than diſoblige her: but, ſince

ſince ſhe leaves me at my liberty, you may ſay what you will, ſir, I will neither have Don Cirillo, nor any other perſon: neither Don Cirillo, I ſay, nor any other perſon. Here I raiſed my eyes from the ground, and ſeeming only to perceive her then, I dropped a profound curtſey, and went away.

I kept the door, through which I retired, a little a-jar, and I overheard the Marchioneſs thus reproving her ſon. What buſineſs is it of yours, whether this girl chuſes to marry Don Cirillo or no? It is true, I was the firſt who propoſed this match to her. But how do you know what intention I had in propoſing it? And have not you ſenſe enough to diſtinguiſh betwixt advice, and violence? Let her follow her own inclinations. I ſee that ſhe is not born for the world; and, therefore, it ſhall be my buſineſs to ſettle her agreeably

to

to her wiſhes. The Count anſwered her in ſome general ſuperficial terms, which plainly enough ſhowed his con-confuſion. His mother, however, only ſuppoſed it an effect of her authority; but, probably, it was the effect of his pleaſure, and ſurprize, on finding her put ſo different a conſtruction upon our interview, from what we feared. They parted without further converſation: and I made many reflections on the narrowneſs of human underſtanding; which often fancies it ſees moſt, when it ſees leaſt; and is ſo apt to be ſeduced by the ſlighteſt appearances.

This accident, too, was a new proof to me, that ſhe had a paſſion for Don Cirillo; and that her application to me was only a fetch to ſound me, and to try whether ſhe ſhould have my rivalſhip to fear. I was certain that ſhe had not the leaſt knowledge of her ſon's correſpondence,

reſpondence, and mine: and I thought I might carry on my diſguiſe, if I could but avoid ſeeing Lady A——, whom we expected the next day. Lord B——, and I, had not planned any meaſures for that criſis: for we had not ſo much as mentioned it in converſation. I wanted to conſult with Don Cirillo; but I was not for giving the Marchioneſs any more motives of jealouſy; ſince it was already diſcernable in her eyes. Therefore, after various projects, I was determined to be my own adviſer: and, in order to ſhun ſeeing the Counteſs next day, or any of her train, who might know me, I concluded, that the beſt ſcheme was to feign myſelf extremely ill, and take to my bed. I thought I ſhould ſucceed ſo well in this artifice, as to deceive the whole houſe, and not barely the Marchioneſs; who, as we have already ſeen, notwithſtanding all her gravity, and accuteneſs, was as readily

dily impoſed upon as any one. I ſhould have done myſelf little credit upon the ſtage, if I had not acquired art enough to keep up a fictitious character, upon occaſion. The neceſſity of fiction, in our intercourſe with mankind, gave riſe to the political obſervation, That he who cannot bely himſelf, is not fit to reign. I ſpeak not of that low, iniquitous cunning, which is the mother of treachery; but, of that guarded acuteneſs, which is the daughter of prudence. When we have to do with people who keep their hearts impenetrably locked up in their breaſts, it is abſurd to preſent ourſelves before them, with ours in our hand. In order to diſcover another, a man muſt conceal himſelf; and in our dealings with a deſigning, ungenerous world, we ought always to be under arms, and ready to defend ourſelves.

THE END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.